GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES:

OR,

Some Sermons concerning the Promises, and the right application thereof.

Whereunto are added some other concerning the usefulness of Faith in advancing Sanctification.

As also, three more concerning the Faith of assurance.

By that pious and faithfull Servant of JESUS CHRIST, Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister at *GLASGOW*.

All being revised since his death by some friends

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

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Regent's Park Coll

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

ALthough (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been keeped back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Presse from other things; yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth assoon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore, in the Preface which we then perfixed, we did relcat to both, and gave the Reader such advertisements as we conceived necessary, concerning the one aswell as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little Piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose; Only, we find some help is offered unto thee, in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion. 1 How by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises. 2. How by Faith thou may advance the work of Sanctification: And 3. how thy Faith may grow up unto assurance: Of all which we may truly say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lord's people in these times.

O how necessary is it in such troublesome dayes, to

learn, how through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promises: *and now when our strong corruption, hath (in a manner) necessitate the wise Physitian to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong a potion, in what a fainting and swounding condition must we be*, if by the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, *we receive not also*, the strong consolation.

Again, when prophanity and ungodlinesse hath so abounded in these Nations, that from the top of the head, to the sole of the foot, there is no soundnesse, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. *And when the corruption of the Time, like the sons of* Zerviah, *are grown too strong, even for the* Davids *who are amongst us; What should we study with more earnestnesse, then* to purifie our hearts by faith, and by having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holinesse in the fear of the Lord? *When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even forgot prosperity. and the multitude changes; and revolutions in our dayes hath so clearly demonstrate the instability of all sublunary glory, and so convincingly taught us, that this is not our rest.* Undoubtedly, it is time to look for a city that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. The subject then is usefull.

As to the manner of handling it: It is true, much accuracy and neatnesse, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleaning of a Church-writter: And as to liveliness and power,

though

though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat & motion of a living man, as to Write or Print these lively motions of the Spirit which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching and in an eminent measure were also let out upon this blessed Author, yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously and feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore spake: Yea, *both conceptions and expressions savouring much of an exercised spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self, but even thirsting also, and panting for the Salvation of others; nay, in some measure,* travelling in birth till Christ might be formed in them. *Oh that more of this holy zeal, and fervency, might accompany this great measure of light and knowledge in the misteries of the Gospel, that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both on Pastors and People in this generation, that once again we might see (as in the dayes of* John the Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. *And that the blessed Spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and inlarge thy Soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternall Salvation, is, and shal be the sincere desires of*

Thy Servants for
Christ's sake,

RO. TRAIL
JO. STERLING.

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GREAT

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

MAy we not truly ſay, that if ever the Chriſtians who live in thoſe dayes ſhall be advanced to ſtand within the holy place, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life, all theſe that are now before his Throne, may lay aſide their Harps and give us leave to ſing? Will it not be a myſtery, ſuppoſe ye, unto heavenly *Enoch* that ſpent ſo much of his time in communion and fellowſhip with God? When he ſhal behold ſuch Chriſtians within that everlaſting reſt, that hath ſpent ſo little of their time in correſponding with God: Will it not be a myſtery unto believing *Abraham* when he ſhall behold ſuch misbelievers, ſuch diſputers of the promiſes of God, advanced to reign with Chriſt? Will it not be a myſtery unto wreſtling *Jacob* when he ſhal behold theſe Chriſtians once crowned

with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Princes to wrestle with God, till they did prevail? Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shal behold such impatient Christians as we have been, entering into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shal behold such unmortified Christians entering within that City, unto which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a mystery unto tender *Josiah*, to behold such Christians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a stone within us, entering into heaven? Will it not be a mystery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold such hypocriticall Christians as the most part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to see those that have been cloathed with hypocrisie and guile, now cloathed with the Robes of immortall Glory? And will it not be a mystery unto self denied *Paul*, when he shal behold so proud and selfish Christians enter into heaven? Give me leave to say this, go where we will, we shal be matchless and singular; for if we shal go into eternity of pain, we shal be the greatest debtors unto the infinite justice of God, in regard of mercies we have received; and if we shal enter into eternity of joy, we shal be the greatest debtors unto the spotless grace of Christ, in regard of mercy we have abused. There shall be none in heaven like to us, and if we shal go to hell, there shal be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but adde this further before I come to the words, go where we will we shall be out of doubt with our condition: With-

in

in a ſhort time a real Chriſtian ſhall be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a Hypocrite ſhall be depreſſed below the reach of his faith, and one that is groſly in nature, he ſhall be abaſed beyond the reach of his preſumption. A Chriſtian ere long ſhall misbelieve no more; a hypocrite ere long ſhall believe no more: and one that is groſly in nature ſhall ere long preſume no more; there is no misbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor preſumption in well being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to ſpeak to, we told you when firſt we began our diſcourſe upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith, that we intended to ſpeak of Faith under a twofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, As it is Juſtifying. And ſecondly, as it is Sanctifying. For the firſt, we reſolved to ſpeak to it in a twofold conſideration. Firſt, As it cloſeth with Chriſt ſimply as the object upon which it reſteth: and of this we have ſpoken from that place, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. 23. Secondly, as it cloſeth with Chriſt, as held forth in the promiſes. And now being to ſpeak of it in this conſideration, we have made choiſe of this place, in which thoſe things concerning the promiſes, ſhortly,

1. Ye have that fountain and ſpring from whence the Promiſes do flow, holden forth in the firſt words of the verſe, *Whereby*, or (as the words may be more fitly rendered) By *Whom*, relating unto Jeſus Chriſt, who is the original and ſpring of all.

2. The properties of the Promiſes, and theſe are,

1. The freedome of the Promiſes held forth in that word, *Given*, whereby are given, which

ſpeake

speaketh this, that the promises are free gifts flowing only from good pleasure. 2. Their unchangeablenesse, and that is holden forth also in the word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are exceeding great, and the Promises are called great, either in respect of that price that was laid down to purchase the Promises, or they are called great, in respect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are precious: Now the promises are called precious, either in respect of their original, that they come from precious Christ; or else in respect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object, *quo*, or by which) of precious faith, as it is called in the first verse of this chapter; or else they are precious, because they are things that a christian ought to put an high account upon; for the word that is rendered precious, may likewise be rendered honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promises.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantage of the Promises, *By them we are made partakers of the Divine Nature*: Now this is not to be understood of any essential conversion of our substance into the substance of God, but of a Christians having the divine vertues of Jesus Christ impressed upon his soul, and expressed in his life and conversation.

And there is this lastly, concerning the Promises in the words, even the time when the Promises are eminently accomplished; It is, *When we have escaped*; or as the word is, *When we have fled from the*.

the corruptions that are in the world through lust: That is the time when a Christian meeteth with the accomplishment of the Promises.

Now before we can speak to any of these, we must speak a little unto some things as necessary to be known, in order to the better understanding of all. 1. We shall not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a Promise: We conceive it is a glorious discovery of the good will of God toward, sinners, and withall, a purpose and intendments and (if we may say) an engagement to bestow some spiritual or temporall good upon them; or to withhold some spiritual or temporall evil from them: And certain it is that in this description of the Promise, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteousnes and Peace, they kiss one another: Neither shal we stand long to point out the distinction of the Promises. 1. There are some Promises that are conditional, and there are some Promises that are absolute, absolute Promises are these that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; such a Promise is that, that God will destroy the world no more by water, that is an obsolute Promise; such a Promise was that of Gods sending his Son into the world, that was an absolute Promise; and such is that Promise of conversion, in giving the heart of flesh, it is an absolute Promise; As for the conditional Promises, they are these that do require some condition to be performed by the Christian, before the accomplishment of the Promise, such as that Promise of Salvation, it requireth believing as

going

going before it, *He that believeth shall be saved*; And pardon, it is promised unto a Christian upon Repentance: And yet we confesse, that there is not a conditional promise that is in all the Covenant of Grace, but it may be reduced unto an absolute promise, in regard that the thing promised, in the conditionall Promise, is on absolute free gift, and the condition of the Promise is another. 2. There are some Promises that are temporall; and some that are spiritual; temporall Promises are these, that promise some temporal thing unto a Christian, and spiritual Promises are these, that promise the bestowing of something that is of everlasting concernment. 3. There are some Promises that are not accomplished in this life, such as this, *That we shall see him as he is, and shall be made like unto him*: But as for the Promises of Faith and of Justification, these are accomplished in this life. 4. There are some Promises that are extraordinary, and there are some Promises that are common; extraordinary Promises are these, that are given to some particular Believers as a singular priviledge, such was that Promise that was given to *Abraham*, that *in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed*; and that Promise that was given to *Rebekah*, *that the elder should serve the younger*: As for common Promises, they are these, that every Believer in Christ hath a right to make use of.

Neither shal we stand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Christian to be much in the exercise of Faith upon the Promises; it is clear from *Psal. 62. 8. Trust in him at all times ye people*, and

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it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witneſſes, recorded of in *Heb.* 11. that ſpent their dayes in embraceing of the Promiſes. But, 7. We would have you conſider, that it is more eaſie for a Chriſtian to believe ſpiritual Promiſes then to believe temporal Promiſes, it is eaſier to truſt Chriſt for eternal Salvation, then to truſt him for our daily food when we are redacted unto ſtraits; and the grounds upon which we aſſert this, may be theſe. 1. Becauſe it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe that Chriſt's death reacheth for the purchaſing of temporal Promiſes, which more eaſily he taketh up in ſpiritual Promiſes; for a Chriſtian can hardly believe that ſuch a thing was in Chriſt's intention, as to die for his daily food, which yet is moſt certain, if we conſider it to as a ſpecial mercy. 2. In a Chriſtians believing of ſpiritual Promiſes, there is often ſome ſenſe and reaſon that helpeth him to the exerciſe of Faith, at leaſt, they preſſe not the contrary; but to believe a temporall Promiſe, when a Chriſtian is redacted unto a ſtrait; and that he can ſee no outgate preſent, ſenſe and reaſon ſtands upon the top of his Faith, and preſſeth him to deſpair; as for inſtance, when a Chriſtian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to ſup at night; to believe that there is a Promiſe upon which he may reſt, that he ſhal not want his food, but that if the Lord have ſervice for him he will provide; here he hath not only reaſon to diſpute againſt, but the ſtrong pinching ſenſe of hunger, both crying out, how can bread be given in the wilderneſſe? 3. The tentations that aſſault a

Christian to misbelieve upon temporal Promises, they are more subtile and more connaturall to a Christian, then his tentations that assault him in resting upon spiritual Promises: When a Christian is in straits in the world, the tentations that hinder the exercise of Faith, they are more consonant unto flesh and blood; we are ready to yeeld to misbelief then, because we think it is rationall, and speaketh the truth. 4. A Christian is often so afrighted by his daily failings, or some particular more grosse out-breakings in this life, that howbeit he may, through grace, be helped to believe that the Lord shal make out these Promises which concerns his eternall Salvation, and so do him good in the latter end; yet may he be sadly perplexed and distrustfull in making use of any particular temporary Promise, for drawing forth any comfort or encouragement therefrom, as to his present exigent; because he knoweth that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions, *Psal.* 99. 8. and therefore may punish his present failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is also much of a naturall and carnall self-love to a present life, remaining in the best, that we are many times worse to satisfie in our securities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come, and can more easily trust the Lord for our souls, then for our bodies; so that though his naked word will sometimes satisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the last ground of it may be a Christians unacquaintednesse with the lot of exercising

exerciſing Faith upon temporall Promiſes, there being many who think not that there is uſe for Faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his Faith upon theſe more difficult then upon Promiſes that are ſpiritual: And this may appear moſt clearly, in that we find men more eaſily bear their ſpiritual wants, even a Chriſtian that is moſt exerciſed, then they bear their temporal wants, and more corruption and impatience doth ariſe from temporal want, then from ſpiritual want.

2. Conſider, that all a Chriſtians duties are turned over into Promiſes: there is not a duty that is required of a Chriſtian, but it is converted into a Promiſe. Is not Faith a duty, in 1 *John* 3. 23. *This is his commandement that ye ſhould believe?* and is not that turned over in a Promiſe, in *Jer.* 3. 19. *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth not only an act of neceſſity, but of violence, thou ſhalt do it, and in the thirteenth of *Zachary*, at the cloſe, *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father*: and ſo in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortification a Chriſtians duty, in *Coloſ.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members*; and it is turned over in a Promiſe, in *Jer.* 32. 28. and *Ezek.* 36. 29. where he promiſeth, that he will purge away all their uncleanneſſes; and it is moſt clear from *Mic.* 7. 19. *I will ſubdue*, ſaid he, *all thine iniquities*, it is not ſaid, *thou muſt ſubdue them*, but, *I will do it.* Is not alſo the knowledge of God a commanded duty? and yet it is turned over in a Promiſe in the Covenant of Grace, *They ſhal know me from the higheſt to the loweſt, neither ſhal there be need any more that one ſhould ſay, know the Lord, for*

they

they ſhal be all taught of me. Is not the commandement of fear your duty, as is clear from *Eccleſ.* 12, 13. and yet that is likewiſe turned over in a Promiſe: *I will put my fear in their inward parts, and they ſhal not depart away from me*: So tenderneſſe is a Chriſtians duty: and yet that is turned over in a Promiſe, *I will take away their heart of ſtone, and give them an heart of fleſh*: And that I may ſay no more of this, look but to theſe four places, and there ye will ſee almoſt all duties turned over in Promiſes: there is, *Jer.* 31. *Jer.* 32. *Ezek.* 11. *Ezek.* 36. ye wil ſee all the duties of the Covenant converted into Promiſes. But may not ſome ſay, What advantage is there of this? much certainly, every way: That the duties are turned over into Promiſe, it may give a Chriſtian hope, that he ſhal once perform theſe duties; will ye not once be tender? yes certainly, becauſe your tenderneſſe lyeth within a Promiſe; will ye not once be much in the exerciſe of fear? no doubt ye will, and the ground of it is this, becauſe your fear lyeth within a Promiſe, and ſo of the reſt. And 2. There is this advantage of it, that all the duties required of a Chriſtian are turned over in Promiſes; becauſe by this means a Chriſtian may go to God, when he cannot perform ſuch a duty, and deſire him to fulfill his word and accompliſh his Promiſe; and ſo may make uſe, not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of the faithfulneſſ of God alſo.

There is this third Conſideration that we would propoſe, that there are ſome things of a Chriſtian within a Promiſe, that he doth not believe to be within

within it, eſpecially theſe three: Firſt, the challenges of a Chriſtian are within a Promiſe, when ye are convinced, that is the accompliſhment of a Promiſe, this is clear from *Iſa.* 30. 21. where convictions and challenges are turned over into a Promiſe; *When thou art turning to the right hand or to the left, thine ears ſhal hear a voice behind thee, crying, this is the way, walk in it*: And it may be clear that our convictions are the accompliſhment of Promiſes, becauſe it is a work of the Comforter, as well to convince, *Joh.* 16. 9. as it is for him to make one rejoice: And if a Chriſtian could believe that his challenges were the accompliſhment of a Promiſe, he might embrace his challenges, he might ſee the faithfulneſſe of God in his challenges, and he might ſee much love in his challenges. 2. A Chriſtians croſſe is within a Promiſe, ſo that when a Chriſtian meets with ſuch afflictions, he may ſit down and cry out, this is the accompliſhment of a Promiſe, and this is clear from *Pſal.* 89. 31. 32. wherein in the midſt of the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace, that Promiſe of viſiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the boſome of them; and from *Pſal* 119. 75. *In faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me*: Why doth *David* ſay in faithfulneſſe? It was this, becauſe his croſſe was the accompliſhment of a Promiſe: and it may be clear alſo from that word in *Heb.* 12. 7. *Forget not the exhortation*, ſpeaking of the croſſe, the word is, *Forget not the conſolation that ſpeaketh unto you*; as if the holy Ghoſt did ſay, croſſes do yeeld much conſolation, as in verſe 11. *They yeeld the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſſe*,

teousneſs; and if this were believed, that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of the promiſes, it would help a Chriſtian unto much humble ſubmiſſion, and there would not be murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accompliſhment of a promiſe: yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of a promiſe, we would be much in advancing holineſs under our croſs. There is nothing that obſtructeth the ſweet fruits of righteouſneſs under a croſs ſo much as impatiency: and I would ſay this to commend the croſs, a Chriſtian never moveth ſo ſwiftly to heaven, as when he is under a ſanctified croſs: a croſs when it is ſanctified, will prove a Chriſtians motions to heaven, more then ten enjoyments; for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, thirdly, that is within the promiſes, even our dayly food, and the hairs of your head: the hairs of a Chriſtians head are numbered, and within the covenant. So that ye may ſee what a high reſpect Chriſt hath put upon Chriſtians; that is cleared from that word, *Pſal.* 11.1.4.5. *He hath given meat unto him that fear him, he will ever be mindful of his covenant.*

Our fourth conſideration ſhal be to point out a little thoſe grounds upon which Chriſt doth delay his accompliſhment of the promiſes: it is certain that a Chriſtian is often times put to this, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a lyar, and as waters that fail?* And the grounds of this delay are theſe

1. Chriſt

1. Chriſt knoweth that a Chriſtian can often better improve the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, then he can improve the accompliſhment it ſelf; we might find this in our experience (it being for the moſt part) eaſier for a Chriſtian to bear his croſſes, then to bear his enjoyments. I think *David* never had ſo ſweet a time as then, when he was purſued as a partridge by his ſon *Abſolon*; then grace did breath forth moſt ſweetly in his actions: but let *David* be under proſperity, and then we ſee he falleth in the ſin of adultery. And therefore never repine when ye are under a croſs; for certainly, if we had ſpiritual underſtanding, we would not judge it ſo great a hazard to be under a croſs, as under proſperity, ſince we have greater ſtrength to bear the one, then to endure the other. 2. The ſloathfulneſs of a Chriſtian to whom the promiſes are made, this maketh the promiſes to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Iſrael*; they are fourty years in a wilderneſs, before that promiſe of entering into *Canaan* is accompliſhed. It was a promiſe that could have been accompliſhed in a few dayes, and yet becauſe of their ſin, it was not accompliſhed for fourty years, as ye may ſee from that word in *Numbers* 14. 33. 34. 3. The accompliſhment of the promiſes is delayed, that faith may be more put in exerciſe; this is clear from that remarkable word in *Pſal.* 105. 19. *Until the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accompliſhed: *The word of the Lord did try him*; that is, it was the matter of his exerciſe, an exerciſe eſpecially

unto

unto faith; for indeed it is much for a Christian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accomplishment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exercise of prayer may be more; and it is certain that the best improvement of delayes is, to be much in prayer; the promises they do occasion prayer, as is cleared from *Exod.* 4. last. *They believed, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped:* and from 2. *Sam.* 7. 27. where the great promises being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God:* and it is clear from *Psalm* 119. 49. *Perform thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delayes, when we turn impatient: and it is a bad improvement of delayes, when we quite our confidence. Know that promises are accomplished after delayes, and they have a luster upon them that they may compense all the delay. 5. There is this other ground of the delays of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be more sweet to a Christian when it cometh: This is clear from that word of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 12. 13. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire doth come, it is a tree of life.* O! but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise, it is sweet; yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, is more sweet then *a feast of fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined.* To take up your bread and your drink, as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshful to you. 6. The Lord delayes his promise

promiſes, that a Chriſtian may be more in the exerciſe of dependency, and may be always keeped about the Throne. A Chriſtian goeth to God from a threefold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of faith, from a principle of neceſſity, and from a principle of love. But would you know that which putteth the Chriſtian oftenest to God? It is a principle of neceſſity. And believe it, that if neceſſity did not drive a Chriſtian unto the foot of the Throne, we would ſeldom go from a principle of love, or from a principle of faith. And there is this laſt ground of the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, that the glory of the wiſdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accompliſhment of the promiſe. When the promiſe is long beneath ground, then the wiſdom and power of God doth more appear in the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And from this I would only ſay to Chriſtians that are under that exerciſe, complaining of the want of performance of promiſes, theſe few things. 1. Believe that the promiſe ſhal once be accompliſhed, that though the *viſion tarry, yet at laſt it ſhal ſpeak*. 2. Believe that every hours delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, hath a ſweet deſign of love. There is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Chriſtian, as is clear from that word, *Rom.* 8. 28. And 3. that promiſe that cometh after long delays, it hath theſe three ſweet and ſoul refreſhing attendants. 1. It is performed moſt ſeaſonably, a Chriſtian if he will obſerve, he will ſee infinit wiſdom ſhining in timing the accompliſhment of the

promiſe to ſuch a particular day: A Chriſtian will be conſtrained to cry out, if the promiſe had been fulfilled before, there had not been ſuch arte of wiſdom appearing in the performance of it. 2. That the promiſe, when it is accompliſhed, will engage a Chriſtian more in the exercíſe of love, then four promiſes accompliſhed at a ſhort and ſmaller time. There is nothing that will ſo inflame the ſoul with love, as to have a promiſe accompliſhed after delays. And 3. the promiſes accompliſhed after delays, have much ſenſe waiting upon the performance thereof. I think hardly a Chriſtian ever met with the accompliſhment of a promiſe after long delay, but his *ſoul was made as a watered garden, and as ſprings of water whoſe waters fail not.* This promiſe faileth, and cometh to a Chriſtian perfumed with love.

Now we ſhal ſhut up our diſcourſe at this time, and ſhal only ſpeak to thoſe ſix defects of a Chriſtians faith in believing the promiſes. 1. That our faith is impatient, we cannot ſtay upon the promiſe if it be delayed: Hence ye will ſee, that in Scripture often patience is annexed to faith, which ſpeaketh this, That it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exercíſe of patience. See *Heb.* 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſe.* And that word in the Revelation, *This is the faith and patience of the Saints.* 2. Our faith in cloſing with the promiſes, it is moſt unconſtant. A Chriſtian when firſt a promiſe is born in upon his ſpirit, he will then believe the promiſe, and join with it: but after

after ſix or ſeven days go about, he will change his faith: This is remarkably clear from *Exod.* 4. 31. compared with *Exod.* 6.9. When firſt the promiſe cometh to the people of *Iſrael*, that they ſhal go out of *Egypt*, it is ſaid of them in the fourth chapter at the cloſe; *They believed the promiſe, and worſhipped*: But look to them in *Exod.* 6. 9. and there ye will ſee them not believing; becauſe of *bitterneſs and anxiety of heart.* And I will tell you the grounds why our faith is unconſtant. 1. Sometimes the reading of a promiſe to a Chriſtian, will be as the ſavoury meat: Sometimes when a Chriſtian will read one time in the covenant, it will be perfumed with love, and his ſoul will be tranſported with joy after it: and at another time, when he ſhal read that promiſe again, it will be *taſtleſs as the white of an egge*, and *as his ſorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in ſtudying the exerciſe of the things that are promiſed, which certainly would cut ſhort many of our debates. There is this third defect of faith, that we are not diligent: a diligent faith we call this, that after a Chriſtian hath believed, he would be much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accompliſhment of the promiſe: he would be much in the exerciſe of meditation, to make that promiſe lively and ſweet to him. And a fourth defect is this, we build our faith more upon diſpenſations, then upon the Word. When diſpenſations ſay that which the promiſe ſaith, then we will believe: but when diſpenſation ſpeaketh the contrary language unto the promiſe, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great

myſteries of believing, It is hard for a Chriſtian to believe, when the commentary ſeemeth to deſtroy the text; that is, when the commentary ſeemeth to declare that the promiſe ſhal never be accompliſhed. In ſum, it is this, It is hard to believe, when diſpenſation will ſay, the Word of the Lord will fail, and when promiſes bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Chriſtian to take impoſſibilities in the one hand, and the word of promiſe in the other, and ſay: O precious Chriſt reconcile theſe two together, that impoſſibilities do not deſtroy the promiſe, but that the promiſe may be accompliſhed notwithſtanding of theſe. 3. We have this defect of faith amongſt us, that we build our faith more upon ſenſe, then upon the word of promiſe: when a Chriſtian is in a good frame, he will believe; but when Chriſt hideth his face, he will then give over his hope. And laſtly, there is this, that our faith upon the promiſes is general; we believe the truth of the promiſes, but we ſtudy not to make a particular application of them, I ſhal not ſtand long to make any uſe of what we have ſpoken; only I would have the Chriſtians of this age, and thoſe that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promiſes. A Chriſtian neglecteth theſe three duties of Religion moſt, he neglecteth the duty of ſelf-examining, the duty of believing the promiſes, and the noble ſoul-exalting duty of meditation: Theſe three duties a Chriſtian doth ſo conſtantly neglect, that almoſt he is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them.

But I would ſay a word unto thoſe that are deſtitute

deſtitute of the faith of the promiſes, and are ſtrangers unto theſe bleſſed things that are recorded within the covenant: And it is only this, doubtleſs ye will believe your ſenſes, if ye will not believe his word. It is a queſtion indeed, which of all the ſenſes ſhal be moſt ſatisfied in heaven, whether that of ſeeing, when we *ſhal behold the King in his beauty, and ſee him as he is*: Or that of hearing, when we ſhal hear theſe melodious *Halelujahs* of that *innumerable company which are about the Throne*, without any jarring amongſt them all? Or that of ſmelling, when we ſhal find the ſweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed with *all the powders of the merchant*: Or that of touching, when we ſhal find *Maries* inhibition taken off, *Touch me not*, and be admitted to imbrace him who is now *aſcended to his Father*: Or that of taſting, when we ſhal drink of theſe *rivers of conſolation, that ſhal never run dry*? This, I ſay, is indeed a queſtion: but give me leave to tell you, O Atheiſts, and enemies to God, it is alſo a queſtion, Which of all the five ſenſes of a reprobat ſhal be moſt tormented in hell? And what would you anſwer to it now? Whether think ye the ſenſe of ſight, when ye ſhal behold that darkneſs of wrath, the Devil and his Angels, and your fellow-priſoners in that dungeon? Or whether ſhal your ſenſe of hearing be moſt tormented in hell, when ye ſhal hear thoſe ſcreighings and howlings that ſhal eternally aſcend up before God, by the ſouls that are in priſon? O, but the greateſt enemy would have compaſſion upon his enemy, to hear their cryes. Or whether will ye ſay

the ſenſe of taſting ſhal be moſt tormented, when ye ſhal drink of theſe *rivers of brimſtone?* Or will the ſenſe of touching, when ye ſhal be eternally ſcorched with theſe flames of eternal indignation? Or the ſenſe of ſmelling, when ye ſhal eternally be, as it were, ſuffocated with the ſmoak of that ſulphurious furnace that ſhal never be quenched? O, think you if *Cain* would come from hell and preach that doctrine, that we ſhould not perſecute the Saints, would we liſten unto him? If *Abſalon* ſhould come from hell, and ſhould preach againſt the evil of ambition, would we liſten unto him? And if *Achitophel* ſhould riſe from the dead, and preach that doctrine unto you; *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom*, would we ſtop our ear? Or if *Judas* would come from hell, and preach the evil of hypocriſie in betraying the Son of man with a kiſs, would we believe him? O, if *Dives* that is recorded in the Goſpel, ſhould come from hell, and choiſe that Text to preach upon, in *James* 5. 1. *Go to ye rich men and howl, and weep for your miſeries that ſhal come upon you.* And if *Demas* would come and ſecond him with that word, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; I fear ye would cry out, we will imbrace that doctrine at *another time.* We deſire not to inſiſt much upon theſe; but, O, to believe that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a deſcription of the Atheiſt, and let him think upon it: it is eaſier to convince hundreds of you that you want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh! an imaginary faith, and a

conceit of love, will ye ever quite theſe two idols? I confeſs, once ye ſhal have a faith that no man ſhal rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he ſhal render vengeance unto thoſe that know him not. To his bleſſed and moſt precious Name, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON II.

2. Peter 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes: that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THough Juſtice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet mercy and truth do go before it, as two divine Uſhers to convey us home unto God. There are theſe two things that we would have a Chriſtian principally to ſtudy. 1. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Chriſt. And 2. that ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe infinite acts of precious condeſcendency that Chriſt hath manifeſted towards you; that the one may provoke you unto ſorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a ſweet aſtoniſhment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Chriſt ſhould preſent that challenge unto you, which *Abſolom* preſented unto *Huſhai*: *Is this thy*

kindneſs unto thy friend? O beloved, what could you anſwer when you were thus reproved? I think if Chriſt had not forgetfulneſſe for that bleſſed end, to forget the wrongs & injuries of his own, I know not unto what uſe Chriſt ſhould have forgetfulneſs, for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works; but he hath a bleſſed arte of forgetting our wrongs; though we may ſay upon the contrary, that we have a curſed arte of forgetting them our ſelves. There are theſe three things that Chriſtians doth forget; they forget much Chriſt that is the great Author of the promiſes, ſo that he may charge them with this, *Why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and theſe divine receipts of love, that Chriſt hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquities; yea, ſometimes they forget them before Chriſt doth forget them, and paſſe an act of pardon upon them. I ſhal not ſtand long to plead with you for your undervaluings of that bleſſed and noble plant of renown: I think if there were no more to evidence that low eſteem that we have of Chriſt, but only this, that we are ſo much in ſlighting the promiſes, it were more then ſufficient: But beſides, is there not this to teſtifie how much you undervalue that *Holy and juſt One*: that ye ſtudy more to have an outward conformity unto him, then to have an inward. We may call the Chriſtians of this time *Nephthali*, they are as *a hynd let looſe*, and they give goodly words; but we do not give Chriſt godly practices: And is not there this alſo that teſtifieth our undervaluings of Chriſt, that we ſlight ſo much, ſecret & retired

retired correspondency and communion with him? I suppose there are some that are here, whose consciences beareth them record, they do not exercise themselves unto godlinesse; and I shal only say that word that *Gideon* spake in another case, *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* Such a spirit of formality, such a spirit of lazinesse, such a spirit of hardnesse, and such a spirit of undervaluing of Christ! I suppose, that if there were a Chronicle written of the lives of all the Saints that have been since *Adam*'s dayes, and the Christians of this time should read over that Chronicle; when they should begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his: and when they should read the life of *Abel*, they must put this to the close of it, my life is not like his: and when they should read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his. O! to which of the Saints can we go? And if ye should call, is there any that would answer you, *your life is like mine.*

But to come to the words we told you at the last occasion that we spake upon them, that there were these things concerning the promises holden forth in them. 1. The rise of the promise is holden forth in the words, *whereby*; or as we cleared, the words may be thus rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jesus Christ.

The second thing concerning the promises holden forth in the verse, is, the property of the promises, and they are these four. 1. That the promises are free, holden forth in that word, *Whereby*

are given unto us: all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant are gifts, and no debt. There is that ſecond property of the promiſes, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *given*, the gifts and calling of God being without *repentance*. And the third property of the promiſes was, that they were *exceeding great*. And the fourth, that they were *exceeding precious*.

The third thing concerning the promiſes, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth to a Chriſtian by the promiſes, that by them we might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the laſt thing concerning them vvas, that time vvhen the promiſes were eſpecially accompliſhed, it was then, *when we had eſcaped the pollutions of the world through luſt*.

Now, as for the firſt thing, to wit, the fountain, original, and riſe of the promiſes, vvhich is Jeſus Chriſt *by whom*: In ſpeaking upon this, we ſhal ſpeak a little unto theſe two. 1. In what reſpects Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain and original of the promiſes; and we conceive he may be ſaid to be ſo: Firſt, becauſe he purchaſed the promiſes unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promiſe in all the everlaſting covenant, but it is the price of the blood of the Son of God; this is clear in *Eph.* 2. 12, 13. where ſpeaking of the Gentiles, that they were ſtrangers unto the covenant of promiſe, he ſetteth down in the 13. verſe, the way by which they were brought near unto the covenant, and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his croſs*; and it is clear in *Epheſ.* 3. 6. that

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the promiſes of the Goſpel *were given unto us in him*, that is, through the purchaſe of him; and his merits: And in 1. *Peter* 1. 19. where we are ſaid *to be bought by his blood*; for the promiſe of Redemption, was the price of blood. Secondly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in this reſpect that he is the perſon unto whom the promiſes of the covenant are firſt made, and through him are made over unto us: this is clear in *Gal.* 3. 16. the promiſes were given unto *Abraham*, not unto many ſeeds, but as *unto one*, that *is Chriſt*: and it is clear from 2. *Tim.* 1. 19. where the promiſes of Grace and Salvation are ſaid to be given unto us *in him*, *before the world was made.* It is true, that the promiſes are not given to Chriſt, conſidered only as the Son of God, (for ſo he had no other relation to us then the Father, or the holy Ghoſt) but yet they are firſt made to him, as the Mediator and *head of his Church*, and as that bleſſed *dayes-man*, and *King of ſaints*, and the great Lord-keeper of all the rights of the young heirs of glory: *And we all receive out of his fulneſs, and grace for grace.* Thirdly, there is this reſpect, in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the premiſes; this is clear in 1. *Cor.* 3. 12. 13. where theſe two are conjoined, *ye are Chriſts*, and then *all things are yours.* If once a ſoul cloſe with Chriſt in the covenant of promiſe, there is not one promiſe in Scripture, but he may write this ſuperſcription above it, *this is mine*; *this is mine*.

Fourth

Fourthly, Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in regard that he is the person that applyeth the promises, and maketh us to rest upon them, and to believe: this *David* did acknowledge in *Psal* 119.49. *Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*: as if *David* said, I had never believed a promise, except thou hadst caused me. And it is clear in *Eph.* 2. 8. where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the promises, it is the royal donation and gift of Christ. Fifthly, he may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in that he qualifieth us for the accomplishment of them. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, and Christ he infuseth habitual graces in us, by which we may be helped to exercise faith upon the promises: so that grant all the Scripture were promises, yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. Sixthly, the last respect in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, is, that all the promises of the everlasting covenant, they have their accomplishment through him; according to that word, in 2. *Cor.* 1. 20. *All the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen*; so that ye are to blesse Christ, not only for the giving of the promises, but for the accomplishment of them also.

That which secondly we shal speak to from this, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, shal be to presse upon Christians these three excel-

excellent and soul-concerning duties. The first, That they would not have a light account of the Promises, since they are rivolets and streams that flow from that blessed Ocean: O but if a Christian did believe that the promise that he hath for his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the second Person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of the promise? and let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high accompt with you, till once ye reduce them unto their rise, & to their fountain: But once know that all the promises are sweet streams of love that have run through the heart of a precious Christ, and from thence they have flowed unto you, & then when this is believed, how shal ye sit down and comfort your selves in the promises, & rejoice exceedingly in them

The second duty that we press upon you from this, is, that since Christ is the fountain and original of promises, be much in the application of the promises. And here I shal speak a little upon these three things. 1. A little unto the evidences & marks of those that have a right to apply the promises; and shal only name unto you these few: The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise, have ye conviction of such a necessity; then from that ye may infer, I have a right to the promises, & are not these glad tidings? I know there are some that are under such convictions of their sin, that they think it is boldnesse to apply the promises? but I would say this unto you, that if ye were under sensible convictions of your lostnesse, you would give world for a hair of a promise wherby to hang; believe

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it, the exercise of misbelief is never at its height, till we would be content to dig through the earth to get a promise; and till we were at that, that our souls would pursue after them from the one end of the world to the other. And for the grounds of this assertion, that sensible necessity giveth a right to the promises, if ye will look to these great promises of the everlasting covenāt, are they not given to that Christian that is under a need, *Isa.* 55. 1. 2. & *Mat.* 11. 28. where the great promises of the Gospel is given out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto these that are *weary & heavy laden*. Christ would account it an excellent courtesie, that you would not dispute, but believe, and that you would look upon your necessities, as his call to believe the promise. 2. A persō that hath an high account of the *promiser*, he hath a right to apply the promises. Let once your soul close with Christ by faith and love, and then you may with boldnesse close with the promises. I confesse, if we were more in believing the promises, we wold have a higher & more full esteem of the promiser: would you know the reason that Christ is not accounted matchlesse, it is because of this, our necessities of the promises is not always within our sight, & our exercising of faith upon the promises is not our dayly work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promise; that which is born in upon a Christiās spirit when he is near God in prayer, & is under most sensible exercise under his own infirmities, he hath readily a right to apply that promise: as for instance, when a Christian is debating himself out of Christ, which is but an unpleasant exercise, to meet with a promise

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born in upon their spirit, that giveth thē some groūd of hope, that they apply & rest upon Christ: or when a Christian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over, to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal; he may probably cōclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is that evidence, persons that have a high account of the promises, they have a right to apply the promises: it is an excellent & most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual applicatiō of the promises; for whē once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting covenant are matchlesse in his eyes, then that is the *valey of Achor*, & a door of hope, that ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoicing of his heart, that is an undeniable sign that he hath right to make use of such promises. Were your souls never refreshed by reading of the boundlesse covenant of love, and the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christiās marking these promises that have upholden them in their straits: I wold have them marking the promises that have beē lively to their souls, and say, This once was my goodly meat, & made me to rejoice in the house of *mine affliction*; & I would have a Christian marking the time of the accōplishment of the promises, in which he wil see infinit wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when th-

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promiſes are accompliſhed (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this, ye ſhould find ſuch a reviving and profitable delight in the promiſes, that ſhould give a very full evidence of your right unto them. 6. Laſtly, when a Chriſtian under ſtraits can receive cõſolation from no other thing, but all prove Phyſicians of no value, and miſerable comforters: when a Chriſtian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under ſuch a croſſe, but in the faith of the promiſes; that is an evidence that this perſon hath a right to the promiſes. I would only ſay this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promiſes, and your litle exerciſe of faith? I would poſe you with this, when laſt ſtudied ye to apply any promiſe of the covenant of Grace? When laſt did ye exerciſe faith upon any of them? Shal I tel you what is the practice of the moſt part of us, we ſtudy perhaps to apply one promiſe, but for the reſt of the promiſes, we lay them aſide, & do totally neglect thẽ: we ſtudy to apply the promiſes of ſalvation, & of having redẽption through Chriſt; but for the promiſes of Sanctification, for the promiſes to help us to perform duties, for the promiſes to ſupport us under the croſſe, for the promiſes to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promiſes in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of theſe. O but if a Chriſtian were believing the promiſes, he might ſit down evẽ while he is here, & ſing one of the ſongs of Siõ, thogh *yet but in a ſtrãge land.*

The ſecond thing that I ſhal ſpeak to upon the application of the promiſe, ſhal be to propoſe unto you ſome rules that ye would make uſe of in the ap-

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plication of them, and ſhal name unto you theſe.

Firſt, ſtudy theſe four things, one is the faithfulneſs & truth of the promiſes, that ſuch a thing is the ſaying of him that is *the faithful witneſs, and Amen.* This was the practice of *Paul*, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. the way how he was brought to make application of the promiſe, was, 1. By laying down that concluſion, this is a faithful ſaying: and *Rev.* 22. from the beginning to the 6. *verſe*, when there are great promiſes made, and much ſpoken to the commendation of heaven, this is ſubjoined in the ſixth *verſe*, *Theſe are the faithful and true ſayings of God:* as if *John* had ſaid, all that I have ſpoken concerning heaven, will be to no purpoſe, except ye believe the truth of the promiſes; and this was the practice of *David*, 2. *Sam.* 7. 28. *Thy words are truth, O Lord:* he ſubjoineth this unto the actual application of the promiſes. 2. Study the ſweetneſſe & excellency of the promiſes, this was the practice of *Paul*, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying*; & then he ſubjoyneth, *and worthy of all acceptation*; and this was the practice of *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 72. *I have eſteemed the Laws of thy mouth better then thouſands of gold & ſilver*: O ſuch an opinion, to eſteem the promiſes better then thouſands of gold! It is hetrodox amõgſt the moſt part of you, that prefer the world before the promiſes of the covenant: and it was his practice, *verſ.* 103. & *verſ.* 162. *I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great ſpoil*: he had a higher account of the promiſes, then to divide the ſpoil after war. 3. Let the Chriſtian ſtudy the neceſſity that he hath of the promiſe, that there is no way of winning above that neceſſity, but the cloſing with the promiſe, and layin-

hold upon it. 4. Laſtly a Chriſtian would ſtudy the ſuitableneſſe that is in the promiſe, to anſwer their neceſſities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifeſted unto them by theſe.

The ſecond rule that we wo'd preſcribe in the applicatiō of the promiſes is, that ye do not expect ſenſible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the promiſe: a Chriſtian may apply the promiſes, & yet want the joy and ſweetneſſe that is in them. This is clear, *Pſ.*119.25. *My ſoul cleaveth unto the duſt*: there he is under much anxiety & much ſorrow, and yet he is a believer of the promiſes in the mean time, as the words following do declare: *quicken me according to thy word*; he layeth claim to the promiſe, & this is clear in the 81. *verſe* of that Pſalm, *My ſoul doth faint within me*; there is much exerciſe of ſorrow, and yet he is a believer in the promiſe, *but I hope in thy word*. A Chriſtian after he hath believed the promiſe, he would put a blank in Chriſts hand concerning the ſweetneſſe of the promiſes, to be made out in its own time. What is ſenſe? Is it not the precious indulgence of Chriſt that he giveth to his own. I would preſſe this upon you, propheſie nothing before your believing of the promiſes; but having believed, ye may ſurely propheſie that the promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed in its own time, and the word that he hath ſpoken ſhal certainly come to paſſe: but as for ſenſe, as for quickning, as for comforting, as for reviving, ye muſt put a blank in the hand of Chriſt to diſpenſe theſe things to you as he ſeeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promiſes, is, that you do not build your faith upō this, that the promiſes

promises shal be accomplished, because probabilities and reason seem to say the thing. I would say this to a Christian, that ye may oftentimes suspect the promise is not near to be accomplished, when reason saith, *Behold, the word of the Lord cometh*; & that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to passe a conclusion, the word is not at hand, & the time of the accomplishment of the promise is not near. certainly many times before christ accomplish the promises, he will learn us to be living above sense and reason, & he will have reason to submit to faith, and he will have probabilities to contradict the accomplishment of the promise; and when probabilities are furthest away, that is his time to work: this is clear in these two signal deliverances of the people of *Israel* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4. 5. and *Ezek.* 37. at the beginning. And therefore as a christian wold not quite his grip of the promises, because dispensations seem to contradict the accomplishment of the promise, and sometime cryeth out; *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your faith upon the promises, and not upon dispensations, even when favorable; seeing that we know the way that christ taketh many times to accomplish the promises, is by contrary means to our apprehension. *His paths are in the whirle-wind, and his footsteps are not known.* And may we not cry out, Who can take up the wayes of God, whose wayes are more subtil then *the way of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon the rock, or the way of a ship in the sea*, &c.

The fourth rule that we wold prescribe unto you

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in the application of the promiſes, is, that ye would cloſe abſolutely with the promiſes; I mean without limiting the only One. There is a limited cloſing with the promiſe, which is the frequent exerciſe of our hearts; vve vvill cloſe vvith the promiſe, but vvith this reſtraint laid upon Chriſt, that vvhenſoever vve begin to believe the promiſes, all things might go as vve deſire: and this is the great occaſion that vve do ſo frequently reject our confidence, and do refuſe our hope, vvhen God doth not anſwer our peremptory expectations.

Fiftbly, we give you this rule, that ye would eye Chriſt much in the application of the promiſes. There is a threefold ſight of Chriſt that a Chriſtian ſhould have when he applyeth the promiſes, a Chriſtian ſhould have a ſight of the boundleſſe & condeſcending love of Chriſt, that ſo he may be cõſtrained to hope, & may be cõſtrained to love. 2. A Chriſtian ſhould eye the faithfulneſſe & unchangeableneſſe of Chriſt, that what his bleſſed lips have ſpoken, *he will alſo do*, and *what he hath ſaid, he will likewiſe bring to paſs*. And 3. in the application of promiſes, he muſt eye the Omnipetency of Chriſt, that what he hath ſaid, he is able to bring to paſſe. And, O when ſhal we have occaſion to ſing that ſong, *What hath God wrought for us*, which was the ſong that *Balaam* ſung, who yet was but a prophane wretch.

6. There is this rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the applicatiõ of the promiſes, that a Chriſtiã after he hath applyed them, he would be much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes: this was the practice of *David*, 2. *Sam* 7. 27.

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When God is paſſing precious promiſes; *David* doth ſubjoyn that word, *Therefore hath I found in my heart to pray this prayer*: And we ſee in *Ezek.* 36. 37. all alongs that Chap. God is paſſing moſt excellent promiſes; and yet in ver. 37. this is ſubjoyned, *For all theſe things, I will be enquired of the houſe of Iſrael*: And in *Jer.* 29. 10, 12 where the time is coming, when God would accompliſh his *good word* (as he ſpeaketh) that is ſubjoyned in ver. 12. *Then ſhall ye call upon me & ſeek after me*: And in *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. whē *Daniel* knew that the promiſe was near the time of its accompliſhment, then he ſet *himſelf for prayer & ſupplication to ſeek the face of God*. I would ſay theſe three words unto a Chriſtian, the ſmaleſt mercy that a chriſtian meeteth with, if he can call it *Samuel*, that is the *ſon of prayer*, and if ye can call it *Iſaac*, that is, *The child of promiſe*, he may then, & doth ordinarily receive much conſolation in that mercy. O but mercy flowing to a Chriſtian thorow a promiſe, if it were but a drink of cold water, & a piece of brown bread, it will be more excellent clear, then all the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O but to eat and drink, taking theſe things as the accompliſhment of the promiſes, this would make us eat our bread, *with ſingleneſs of heart & much chearfulneſs*. And there is this, ſecondly, I would ſay unto you, When a promiſe is accompliſhed, & a Chriſtian is not much in the exerciſe of prayer in the accompliſhment of it, one to a hundred if he looſe not the ſanctified uſe of the accompliſhment of that promiſe. Ah, know ye not that a promiſe when it is accōpliſhed, may be a curſe to a chriſtian. That word is moſt terrible, *Mal.* 2 2. *I wil*

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curse your blessings. And the last word that I wold say as to this is, that a christian who believeth the promises, notwithstanding that dispensations seem to cõtradict it, that promise shal be made most refreshful unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O, but a christian that never had much jealousie, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise, when it cometh it will be most refreshful unto him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousie about the accomplishmẽt of the promise, but it wil impair the sweetnesse of the promise when it is accomplished, except in so far, that the transcendant & free love of christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shal offer, a christian in his application of the promises, when ye meet with objections that ye cannot answer, but they do silence you; I will tell you what ye should do with them, misken these objections, and lay them by. This was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 9. *He considered not his own body being weak, and the deadness of* Sarahs *womb*. The weakness of his own body, & the deadnesse of *Sarahs* womb, were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, that he could not answer them; & the way he taketh to refute them was, *he did not consider them*; as it were, he forgot these objections, and went about his duty. The third thing that we shal speak to, in relation to the application of the promises, shal be somewhat for helping a christian that is standing at too great a distance to get the promises applyed.

First, a christian would be much in the study of these

these experiences of the faithfulness of God, & what others have met with. When ye begin to apply a promise, ye may be helped in the faith of applying promises, by beholding these great records of the faithfulness of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, *Luk.* 1. 36. where helping her to believe that promise, that of her should be born the Messiah; this is the way that he strengtheneth her, *Thy cousing Elizabeth is now with child, & hath gone six moneths, even she that was called barren.* And I shal only name these two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, & strengthen you to believe the promises upon this account. There is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41, & 51. It is a most remarkable saying, *at the end of the four hundreth and thirty years, on the same very day,* (there was not one day missed after the time that was set was accomplished) *In that same very day they came out,* & this is marked in ver. 51. again: And there is that word, 1 *Kings* 8. 56. where *Solomon*, when he is singing most sweetly to God, he taketh observation of this, *Loe*, saith he, *there hath not failed one word that God hath spoken to you by his servant Moses.*

Secondly, ye mould be much in the consideration of your own experiences, that you have in the accomplishment of promises formerly. This was *Davids* way that he took to strengthen himself to believe the promise, *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 34. and 37. 46. And this was the practice of the Apostle *Paul* 2 *Tim.* 4. 17. 18. *God hath delivered me from that cruel*

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Lion. And from thence he ſubjoyneth, *and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*: And this was his practice, 2 *Cor*. 1. 10. where theſe three things are ſweetly knit together, *God hath delivered me*, he *doth deliver me, and he ſhal deliver me*. Here is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you: O believe the promiſe, and do not call in queſtion his faithfulneſſe.

Thirdly, there is that help, that ye ſtudy much the excellency of the promiſes, that is the moſt noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promiſes according to that word, *Pſal*. 119. 111. *I have made thy teſtimonies mine heritage for ever*, and the ground of it is that, *Becauſe they are the rejoicing of my heart*. The ſweetneſſe of the promiſes would engage our heart to apply them.

And there is that fourth help, A Chriſtian would ſtudy the omnipotency of God, that ſo he may be helped to believe and apply the promiſe; this is clear in *Zech*. 12. 1. where God going to paſſe many excellent promiſes, he uſhers in that diſcourſe with high and majeſtick deſcriptions of his power, in that he *ſtretched forth the Heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the ſpirit of man within him*. And this was the practice of *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 21. the way how he came to believe the promiſe, *He counted him able* that had made it, that he might perform it.

Fifthly, For your help in applying of the promiſes, Study much the unchangeableneſſ of Chriſt, & his faithfulneſſe, know that he is the ſame yeſterday, & to day, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came

came to the faith of the promiſes *Heb.* 11. 11. *She believed*, and the ground of it is, that *ſhe judged him faithfull that had promiſed*. There is not one act of misbelief that a Chriſtian falleth into, but it ſaith, that God is not faithfull, and that he is not true.

Now the laſt duty that we would preſſe from this point, that Chriſt is the fountain of the promiſes, is that we may have an high eſteem of the Promiſer; even of Jeſus Chriſt; *in whom they are yea, & Amen.* And I ſhal cloſe all at this time with this, are there not many here, that have no reſpect unto him who is that *faithfull witneſs and Amen*; who hath promiſed us *himſelf and all things*: and if ye will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but anſwer theſe two or three things. 1. Hath not the loſſe of things in the world affected your heart more, then ever abſence from Chriſt did? Hath it not? And can ſuch a ſoul ſay, I have an high account of the promiſer? Is it poſſible, that theſe that will mourn more under the abſence of their idols, than for the want of him, that they can have an high account of Jeſus Chriſt? I am perſwaded of this, that there are ſome Merchants, that the loſſe of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nights reſt, and yet abſence from Chriſt never did divert them from their ſleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jeſus Chriſt, and to enjoy his fellowſhip make you riſe up in the ſilent watches of the night, and to purſue after him? 2. Have not your ſouls delighted more on the enjoyment of the things of a world, than ever they did after the enjoyment of Chriſt? Is not this true, that the encreaſe of wine and oyl,

& of silver and gold hath affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ did? And have you a high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship & communion with the Promiser; is this true? When went you to your prayers, but ye wearied ere ye went away? And have ye a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts; *O when shall the Sabbath be over? & when shal the new moon be gone, that I may pursue after my idols?* I would pose you with this, if there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret prayer, would you not slight family prayer? We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know there are atheists here, that would love to go to heaven without faith, love, prayer, and repentance; they would love to go to heaven by a way that never one went before them. And now I shal say but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promise, and have the blessed expectation of heaven, what ever the world do, esteem ye highly of him. O remember and comfort your selves in the thoughts of the blessed day when Christ (after he hath past the sentence of cõdemnation upon the wicked) shal go in upon the head of the Troups of the first-born, he shal walk in before us through the ports of the new Jerusalem, having crowns of immortal glory upon his head, and then shal follow after him his Angels, and then shal follow after him the blessed company of the first-born, every one having the harps of God in their hand, and they shal be singing as they enter in thorow the ports of the City, *Halelujah to him that was dead, and is alive,*

and now liveth for evermore. O to believe that day when firſt we ſhal enter in thorow the ſtraits of the new Jeruſalem, when we ſhal be cloathed in white robes, having Crowns upon our head! O ſuch a day, if it were believed, might make us often ſhake our glaſſe, & *ſtretch out our neck*, as the word is *Rom.* 8.19. till once we ſaw that bleſſed day were approaching to us! There is no wearying in heaven, the promiſes are now accompliſhed unto them, & they are inheriting the promiſes: When ſhal that word be accompliſhed, or when ſhal we have occaſion to ſay it? *Mark* 1.37. *Behold all men ſeek after thee*; the word that theſe Diſciples ſpake to Chriſt: O ſtudy to love him, ſtudy to believe on him, for be perſwaded he is upon his way. And I ſhal ſay no more but this, that all the promiſes that are within the bounds of this everlaſting Covenant, they are yea, and Amen, in an imbraced Chriſt, & laid hold on by faith; ſo I ſay, all the curſes that are in *Deut.* 26. 27, 28. and all the curſes that are within the volumn of the book of this Covenant, they ſhal be yea, and Amen in a deſpiſed Chriſt and not laid hold upon by faith.

SERMON III.

2. Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

SOmetimes the ſoul of a Chriſtian doth move in the paths of God, and in the wayes towards Zion, *as the chariots of Aminadab*, when they are under the ſoul-enliving and quickening influences

of heaven, and ſometimes the ſoul of a Chriſtian doth move in thoſe bleſſed paths, as *Pharoahs* chariots, *they drive moſt heavily*, when there is a cloud betwixt the precious face of Chriſt and them; and we conceive that ſound & ſpiritual exerciſe of faith upon the promiſes would make a Chriſtians motion more ſwift towards heaven. We grant Chriſt hath three different wayes of guiding ſons and daughters to Glory: There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to heaven in a chariot paved with love, that all alongs their life they are living within ſight of that promiſed land, and are taken up with the refreſhing foretaſts of the heavenly joyes: Such a one was *Henoch*, who ſpent his dayes in walking with God: There are ſome that Chriſt guideth to heaven in a chariot that is drawn with ſpeckled horſes, they have mixed diſpenſations of ſorrow and of joy attending them in their walk, they have a winter and a ſummer, they have a night and a day, and ſuch a one was *Job* 3. There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under diſtracting terrors of the moſt High, and are living perpetually to their own apprehenſions upon the borders of hell, and ſuch a one was *Heman*, whom Chriſt thus did guide to heaven; however, if we ſhal go there, we need not much diſpute the way how we came, *for he doth all things well.* And upon the other part, Satan hath three different wayes of guiding ſouls unto everlaſting torments; there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of deluſions, making them believe that they are ſtill going to heaven, and ſuch are the hypocrites in Sion: &

I ſhal ſay, I think that chariot was never filled as it is in thoſe dayes. O ſear that anxious diſappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An hypocrite hath ſtrong hopes, he hath ſtrong idols, and he hath ſtrong deluſions; theſe are his three attendants. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of prophanity and ignorance of God, *whoſe judgement goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hel in a chariot of civility, whoſe Religion ſtands in this *concerning the letter of the Law to be blamleſſe*. And certainly, believing of the promiſes, and ſtudying to exerciſe faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of theſe damned ſoul-deſtroying and murthering deluſions that are within ſome of our breaſts. There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Chriſt he is called precious, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious Faith with us*, and the promiſes they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and faith (as it were) hath two bleſſed eyes, by one of theſe it beholdeth Chriſt, and by another of theſe it beholdeth the promiſes, and fixeth it ſelf upon them. O Chriſtians and expectants of heaven, would ye know what is the riſe of the ſad things that hath befallen you in theſe dayes? It is this in ſhort, ye believe not the promiſes. O Chriſtians, what is the reaſon that ye carry not your croſſes with patience? It is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes by the which your ſouls muſt be upholden in the day of your affliction. O Chriſtians

what is the riſe of your little mortification? Is it not becauſe ye believe not the promiſes; for by them ye ſhould *be made partakers of the divine nature.* O Chriſtian, what is the ground that ye pray ſo little, and that ye pray with ſo little ſucceſſe? It is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes. A Chriſtian when he goeth to pray, he ſhould take theſe two things along; 1. The ſenſible convictions of his neceſſities: And 2. The precious promiſes that is given to anſwer that neceſſity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other Faith. Are not there ſome here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promiſe, and that maketh you pray to ſo little purpoſe. O Chriſtian, what is the reaſon of your ſo much ſorrow, and of your little ſpiritual comfort? It is that ye believe not the promiſes; It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, becauſe ye exerciſe not faith upon the precious promiſes of God. I think without wronging you or any that are here; I doubt much if ever Chriſtians had ſuch hearts as the moſt part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praiſe? both are alike myſteries unto them: What a heart is that, O Chriſtian, that can neither believe promiſes, believe threatnings, nor obey commands? What a heart is that, that can neither ſorrow for ſin, nor rejoyce in God? And what a heart is that can neither love Chriſt when he is preſent, nor can they long for Chriſt when he is abſent? and what a heart is that? O Chriſtian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell; and is there not ſuch hearts with us, even with us that are here this day?

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we ſpake a little to the firſt thing in them, which was the riſe and original of the promiſes, holden forth in that word, *Whereby*, or *by whom.*

The ſecond thing in the words, was the properties of the promiſes; and we told you that there were theſe four holden forth in the words. The firſt property of the promiſes is, that they *are free*, which is imported in that word, *are given*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence ye will ſee that oftimes the tenor of the Covenant of grace runs upon that ſtrain, *I will give you*, as is clear, *Jer.* 32.26. *I will give you one heart*, and *Ezek.* 36.26. *I will give you a new heart*: and *Ezek.* 11. 9. *I will give you*; it is the ſtrain of the lāguage of the covenāt of grace, *to give.*

Now in ſpeaking upon this firſt property of the promiſes, to wit, *their freedome*: I ſhal ſpeak a little unto theſe two, the firſt thing ſhal be to point out unto you theſe two, the firſt thing ſhal be to point out unto you the way how a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, and then I ſhall from thence preſſe ſome duties.

And in ſhort, as to the firſt, we conceive that a Chriſtian may win unto the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, by theſe conſiderations. 1. Let a Chriſtian caſt his eye upon the ſweet riſe, and ſpring or fountain of the promiſes, and there ye will ſee their freedom ſhining moſt clear: for what is the fountain of the promiſes? Is it not the boūdleſſe and everlaſting love of Chriſt? this is clear in

Deut.

Deut. 7. 8. where God giving a reaſon of all the great things that he had performed for them, he ſetteth down the riſe of it, *Becauſe I have loved you*, there being no reaſon of love, but love; and it is clear in 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. where *David* having received many precious promiſes, he ſetteth down the riſe of all theſe in that verſe, *for thy words ſake*, ſaith he, *and according to thine own heart haſt thou done all theſe things to make them known to thy ſervant.* And it is clear, 16. 8. where God calleth the time of entering into Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love it was eminently ſhining in that day when God did condeſcend to covenant with them: and hence ye ſee in Scripture, that the promiſes they are called by that name of *mercy*, Micah 7. 20. *to perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the *Promiſes*, and they are ſo called, becauſe mercy and boundleſſe love is the ſole-fountain and ſpring of all theſe promiſes. Secondly, conſider the perſons who have right to make uſe of the promiſes: Muſt not the promiſes be free when the proclamation is upon theſe terms, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him come*, there is nothing to give you a right to the promiſes, but only a willingneſſe to embrace them, if ye will, ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedome of the promiſes in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promiſe, Chriſt giveth to the Believer ſtrength to perform that condition: It is known that faith is the condition of the promiſes, and it is certain Chriſt giveth a Believer that condition as well as he giveth him the promiſe, *Phil.* 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*, and *Eph.* 2. 8. *It*

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is the gift of God. It is impossible for a Christian to perform the condition, except Christ who is surety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the time when the promises are accomplished, it is often at such a time, when the Christian hath been, and is under no very spiritual frame. Hence ye will see in *Ezek.* 16. 60. 61. that when the promises are accomplished, then God requireth *confusion and blushing of face* because of their former wayes; and *Ezek.* 36. 31. when the promises are accomplished, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them *to remember their own evil wayes, and their doings that were not good*; yea, he will have them and all the world to know *it is not for their sake that he doth this*; therefore he commandeth them to *be ashamed and confounded for their own wayes*, or the posture they were in when he accomplished his promise: And if there were no other thing to speak the freedom of the promises, but the trysting of the accomplishment of them with such a frame, it were more then sufficient: But beside this, see *Davids* practice 2 *Sam.* 7. 8 he readeth the freedom of the promises from his own imperfections, *What am I*, saith he, *and what is my fathers house, that thou shouldest have brought me hitherto?* And even in the same Text, there is an Emphasis in that word, *to us*; *Whereby are given to us*, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts: I can bring no other argument so strong as this. *They are given to us.* Fifthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye will consider and take up the infinite fulnesse

and al-ſufficiency of the Promiſer, that there is nothing without himſelf that can perſwade him to give ſuch promiſes. Hence ye will ſee that in *Gen.* 17. 1. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it ſtill in the Frontiſpiece of the Covenant, *I am God al-ſufficient*, as it were, to put of all thoghts of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perſwaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himſelf, that could be the ground and riſe of ſuch promiſes. And there is that, laſtly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the greatneſſe of the promiſes: If they were of a low nature, then were it leſſe to be wondered if merit ſhould come in to plead for it ſelf: But when a Chriſtian ſhal compare himſelf, and the greatneſſe of the promiſes together, he cannot but then ſing that bleſſed ſong, *Theſe are the gifts, donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers houſe that thou haſt brought me hitherto.*

Now the ſecond thing that we purpoſe to ſpeak to, is, to preſſe ſome duties upon you from this, that the promiſes are free, and we ſhal lay before you theſe three. The firſt, that ſince the promiſes of God are free, then as ye would not deſtroy your own ſouls, be much in making uſe & application of the promiſes. Are not the promiſes your life? Did not all the Saints that went to heaven before us, go to heaven, living upon the promiſes? There was not a ſtep of *Abrahams* life, but he walked with a promiſe in it: there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himſelf from

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the promiſes: and I ſhal remove theſe two miſtakes that are incident to Chriſtians in the application of the promiſes, even from this ground, that they are free.

The firſt is this, there are ſome Chriſtians that will not apply the promiſes, becauſe they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, & of their own baſeneſſe; ſo that when we preſſe you to believe the promiſes, ye reject this counſel, becauſe ye conſult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, *Pſal.* 22. 4. *Our fathers truſted in thee; they truſted, and were delivered:* but he durſt not in the 6. verſe. *But I am a worm, and not a man: I am a reproach amongſt the people.* And it is that ſame divinity that is in theſe dayes, when we preſſe you to believe the promiſes, becauſe of the great cloud of witneſſes that have gone before you, that believed the promiſes. O, ſay ye, if I were like *David* & *Abraham*, I would believe the promiſes; but truly *David* ſaid that ſame, that lived before you; if I were like my fathers, I would believe the promiſes, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would ſay to you theſe two words. 1. Are ye inferior or ſhort unto *David* in holineſſe, or neceſſities? We do not queſtion but all of you will anſwer, we are not inferior to *David* in neceſſities, but in holineſſe: Then ſay we, if ye be not inferior to *David* in neceſſity, then make uſe of the promiſes: for as we cleared the laſt day, neceſſity giveth a right in making uſe of the promiſes. 2. I would ſay, I am certainly perſwaded, that ſenſible neceſſity would cut ſhort many of our formal debats, in cloſing with the

promiſes

promiſes; neceſſities, as ye uſe to ſpeak, hath no law, and neceſſity hath no manners. Let me ſay that to you who will not cloſe with the promiſes, that if ye were under ſenſible neceſſity, if Chriſt ſhould forbid you to cloſe with ſuch a promiſe, ye would cloſe with it though he forbid you, as the woman of *Canaan* did, there is nothing but ſenſible neceſſity will overcome it: neceſſity never diſputs its right, for it goeth over the belly of ſuch a diſpute, it preſently maketh uſe of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly, there is that other miſtake amongſt Chriſtians in believing the promiſes, that they want the qualificatiõs annexed to the promiſes, & therefore they dare not believe the promiſe, eſpecially that promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt; they think they are not under ſuch a deep meaſure of humiliation, of ſorrow for ſin, nor under ſuch lively apprehenſions of the excellency of Chriſt. And I ſhal ſay but theſe ſix things unto thoſe that will not cloſe with Chriſt, becauſe they want qualifications, or at leaſt have not theſe qualifications after ſuch a way. Firſt, let me tell thee, O Chriſtian! that thus diſputs, go between the firſt ſteps of a Chriſtians way to heaven and the laſt, and ſee if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written; Behold, here lyeth a man, or a woman, that came to chriſt to imbrace him, & he would not receive them: Did ye ever behold ſuch a grave as this? And why then do ye ſo much diſpute? Will ye take a tryal of chriſt whether he will refuſe you if ye come? And if he ſhal refuſe you, ſure I am he will do that which he never did to any before you. The ſecond thing I would

would ſay to ſuch, that the want of ſuch degrees of ſuch things, ought not to be a ground of your not cloſing with Chriſt; for if ye had theſe qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain that ſame diſpute that ye do now: for when we deſire you to cloſe with Chriſt, ye anſwer, that your ſorrow is not come to ſuch a height as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to ſuch a height, as ye pitch for your ſelf to come to. O Chriſtian! if ye come to ten times more, and yet ten times more, ye would have that ſame diſpute then which ye have now: & the groũd of it is this, the more that a Chriſtian hath real ſorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehenſion that he hath no ſorrow. Thirdly, if ye want the qualifications that are required in thoſe that ſhould cloſe with Chriſt in the covenant of promiſe, then come to Chriſt to get theſe qualifications. I would only ask at you, think you to ſpin ſorrow for ſin out of your own hearts? Think ye to ſpin humiliatiõ for ſin out of theſe wretched breaſts of yours? ye muſt come to Chriſt for ſorrow, as well as ye come to Chriſt for life. Fourthly, all the qualifications that are annexed unto the promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt, and comming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of thoſe that ought to come. Ye read ſuch a command as that, *Come unto me all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O ſay ye, I am not weary, I am not under the burden of ſin, therefore I cannot come. I will tell you what is the meaning of that command; Chriſt inviteth thoſe who have the greateſt unwillingneſſe, to come and get willing

willingneſſe: But withall, it ſhoweth this, none will come to get reſt from Chriſt, but theſe that are firſt weary: and that this is the Lords method of working; firſt, to make weary, and then to eaſe; but no ſuch matter in his word: That firſt, we muſt have a wearineſſe of our own making, or elſe he will not receive us: Now, but when ye come, ye will be weary, and he wil receive you. Fifthly, let me ſay to you who thus diſputes, make your want of qualifications the very ground of your cloſing with Chriſt, I ſhal but in three places let you ſee this ſtrange arguing of faith in cloſing with the promiſes: there is that in *Pſal.* 40. 11. 12. *Let thy truth continually preſerve me*; that is, let thy promiſes be accompliſhed and made lively unto me, which are my preſervation: and would ye know the ground and reaſon that he annexeth unto this; for, ſaith he, *Innumerable evils hath compaſſed me about; they have taken ſuch hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his very want of qualifications the ground of his cloſing with the promiſes, and ſeeking the accompliſhment of it. And there is that ſecond expreſſion which is moſt wonderful, in *Pſal.* 25. 11. *David* prayeth for the accompliſhment of that promiſe: *pardon my ſin*, upon that ſame very account, *becauſe it is great.* And I ſhal give you a third place in which the arguing of faith is moſt myſterious, *Exod.* 33. 3. compared with *Exod.* 34. 9. In the firſt place, God denieth the accompliſhment of that promiſe, of *going up amongſt that people.* And the groûd he giveth of it is, *becauſe*, ſaith he, *ye are a ſtiff-necked people.* And *chap.* 34. *verſ.* 9. when *Moſes* is praying

praying for the accompliſhmẽt of that promiſe, that *God would go up amongſt them*; he taketh that lame very argument out of the mouth of God: Go up amongſt us; *for*, ſaith he, *we are a ſtiff-necked people*. God ſaid, he would not go up, becauſe they were a ſtiff-necked people, and *Moſes* deſireth him to go up, becauſe of this. And there is this, laſtly, that we would ſay to you that ſo much diſpute: If ye would have theſe qualifications that ye want, ye would ſtudy to cloſe with Chriſt by faith: Would ye have ſorrow for ſin? then believe. Would ye have high thoughts of Chriſt? then believe. Would ye have humiliation? then believe: for believing is a mother grace unto all theſe.

The ſecond duty that we would preſſe upon you from this conſideration that the promiſes are free, is, that when the promiſes are given to you, and are accompliſhed, ye would ſtudy to be denyed to any merit in your ſelves, which ye may ſuppoſe to be the riſe of the giving or accompliſhment of theſe promiſes. There is nothing that a Chriſtian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that tryſteth a Chriſtian, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not one blink of the precious countenance of chriſt, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not the leaſt degree of hatred againſt ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not the leaſt promiſe that is accompliſhed unto you, but it is the fruit of infinite love: ſo that upon all our receipts from God, there is reaſon to ſing that ſong, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory*. And therefore I wold preſſe this upon

you

you, O Christians! reduce all your merits unto the fountain, and there sit down and pen Songs of everlasting praise to him. Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promise, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels and tender heart of Christ: his heart is the fountain of all his mercies, and they sweetly stream out of that precious fountain; so that if he had no other thing to commend your mercy from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Christ, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and solace your selves with it.

The last duty that we wold presse upon you from this cõsideration, that the promises are free, is this, ye would be studying to close with Jesus Christ that is promised & freely holden out to you in the Gospel. O sinner of eighty years old! O sinner of sixty years old! O Atheist of fourty years old! And, O sinner of twenty years old, & downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambassador of Jesus Christ, to imbrace Christ freely offered in the promise; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that noble *plant of renown*, by that everlasting love that dwelt in his precious heart, by all the sufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the blessings and joyes of heaven, and by that love that ye owe to your precious and immortal souls, that ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to you in this Christ. And for the further pressing of this, & for clearing of the way of your closing with him, I shal first propose four precious Gospel-mysteries, and sweet agreeing contradictions (if so we may

speak

ſpeak) held forth in Scripture. 1. *Come and buy Chriſt, and yet buy without money*; that is, come and receive Chriſt, and ye ſhal have as unqueſtionable a right to him, as if ye had bought him, that is to *buy without money*; ye have nothing to commend you to Chriſt, but neceſſities; & neceſſities biddeth you go, and Chriſt biddeth you come; why then will ye ſit this call? 2. What a Goſpel-myſtery is that, *ye are to buy Chriſt, and yet Chriſt is above price?* there is nothing that we can give to buy that *pearl of greateſt price*, and yet we muſt buy him: then the meaning is, come and buy Chriſt by faith, and by forſaking of your idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himſelf; and ſo he requireth nothing of you but what he himſelf doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forſake, and which is no gain for him to receive. Chriſt is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of your conſent to him. 3. This is a Goſpel-myſtery, that *we are to buy without money, & without price, & yet to buy with a price*; according to that word, *Prov.* 17. 17. there is a price put in the hand of fools, to buy wiſdom; and what is the meaning of that, *to buy with price, and to buy without price?* It is in ſhort this, though Chriſt be offered to you in the Goſpel freely, ye muſt not ſit down, but be active in cloſing with him. What is the price that Chriſt requireth of you? Even this, that ye would forſake your ſoul-deſtroying idols, & that ye would forſake your former evil wayes, and take hold of the preſent opportunity for imbracing him. And, O! curſed ſhal that heart be that will not imbrace Chriſt. O! but to have him one hour in our

arms

arms, it were well worth ten thousand eternities of the enjoyments of all things that are here below: ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breasts*. O but a sight of him that now is the eternal raviſhmēt of all that are above, would transport your hearts with joy, with delight, & admiration, above all expreſſion! Fourthly, there is that Goſpel-myſtery by which we would preſſe you to imbrace *Christ*. *A Christian muſt buy Christ, and yet he muſt have him freely*. Is there not an inconſiſtence, do you ſuppoſe, between buying and having freely? But I would ſay this to clear it, Chriſt is both the ſeller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer. Chriſt he preſenteth himſelf unto your hearts, & he deſireth to ſell himſelf, and he perſwadeth and freely enableth you to buy him. I will tell you what Chriſt doth, he ſtandeth without our hearts, and within our hearts: he ſtandeth without & knocketh by the Word; and he ſtandeth within, and openeth by his Spirit: Chriſt he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, & without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The ſecond thing I ſhal ſay to perſwade your hearts to take Chriſt freely promiſed & offered unto you, ſhal be this; Will ye conſider that there is willingneſſe in the heart of Chriſt to take you. I ſhall give you theſe ſix things that ſpeaketh out Chriſt's willingneſſe to receive you. Firſt, Doth not he command you to come and receive him? & if ye could multiply objections throughout eternity, why ye ſhould not cloſe with Chriſt, ye may cut them all aſunder with his knife, *This is his Commandement*

dement: And doth he not command you in *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour*: And *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters.* Secondly, He doth regrate and deeply reſent it that ye will not come. I think Chriſt never weeped ſo bitterly, as that day when he weeped over Jeruſalem, that they would not imbrace him, *Luke* 19. 41. *If thou, even thou,* at leaſt, *in this thy day, had known theſe things that belong unto thy peace*: And *Joh.* 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* O what think ye can be the riſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould ſorrow becauſe ye wil not give up your hearts to him; doth he increaſe his gain when ye give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madneſs in you, that ye ſhould forſake your only gain. Thirdly, Would you do Chriſt a joyful turn, and make his heart glad? Imbrace him. This it clear, *Luke* 15. 5. that when he findeth the ſheep that is going aſtray, *He returneth rejoicing.* Fourthly, I ſay more unto you, would ye make all the Perſons of the bleſſed Trinity to rejoice, would ye make all the Angels of heaven to ſing, would ye make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exult for joy; then give your hearts up to Chriſt, and cloſe with him in the Covenant of promiſe; according to that word, *Song* 6. laſt v. *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee.* Four times that command is repeated, *return,* and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the Perſons of the Trinity may rejoice, *That we may look upon thee.* Fourthly, conſider but how he hath condeſcended to give himſelf at a very

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low rate: What will ye give for Christ? O sinners, what will ye give for him? Would ye give the world for Christ? I will tell you what ye will get Christ for, ye will get him for a very look, *Isa.* 55. 22. *Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth*: And think ye not that this is a matchlesse mercy, that the thirty three years sufferings of Christ, all the pains and tortures of the heart, his being under the unsupportable wrath of an offended God, the fruit of all that should be yours for a look. Will ye deny that to Christ? Oh, do ye ever think to find a more down-coming market? Yea, fifthly, doth not this speak an admirable willingnesse to have you, he is to give you that look. It is impossible for these cursed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Christ a look, and therefore he hath promised to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shall look to me*, that very look ye are to get from Christ, and ye see it is within the compasse of a promise. Lastly, That speaketh Christs willingnesse to receive and take you, that he doth not take the first refusall. O Christians that are now in Christ, if Christ had taken an hundred refusals from you, ye should never have been in heaven, but he waiteth for an answer, and doth not take us at our first word: According to that word, *Song* 5. 2. *I am wet*, saith he, *with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night*. He was long knocking at her heart, & stayed a long time there patiently, suffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would pose you, think ye that if one of the richest of you were suiting a very poor woman, and she refused you so many times

times, would your proud hearts ſubmit to take her? And yet how oftentimes hath the precious heart of Chriſt ſubmitted to many affronts and refuſals that we have given him. I think, if it were poſſible, Chriſtians vvould vvink vvhen firſt they behold Chriſt upon the day of their eſpouſals; for I ſuppoſe there will be a great diſpute between ſhame & love, deſire and confuſion: ſhame will make you to cloſe your eyes, becauſe ye have oftentimes undervalued that Prince, and yet love dow not let you cloſe them; deſire will put you to a look, though reflecting upon your former wayes, will make you bluſh and be aſhamed.

Thirdly, to perſwade you to receive Chriſt in the offer of his free promiſes, I ſhal ſay but theſe three words & cloſe. 1. Look to theſe excellent gifts that Chriſt bringeth with him, he bringeth Juſtification with him, & is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth Sanctification with him, & is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the holy Ghoſt with him, & is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under ſufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? But why ſhould I name what he bringeth? He bringeth himſelf & all things, and what would ye have more? O, but for one ſaving blink of his face, it wold make your hearts lay down your enimity that you have maintained ſo long. 2. O Chriſtian! that ye may cloſe with Chriſt, do but remember the happineſſe that ye will have in imbracing him. I told you not long ſince, and now I put you in mind again, there is a ſixfold crown which ſhal be put upon your head. Would you

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have long life? then come to Christ, and you shal have a crown of eternal life. Would ye have glory? then come to Christ, and ye shal have a crown of glory. Would ye have knowledge of the mysteries of God? then come to Christ, and he shal crown you with knowledge. Would you have an eternal felicity, and an uninterrupted happinesse? then come to Christ, & ye shal have an immortal crown. Would you have holinesse and sanctification? then come to Christ, and ye shal have a crown of righteousnesse; yea, he shal put a royal crown upon your head, a crown of pure gold; and then that word shal be accomplished to the full, *Zech. 9. 16. Then shal they be as the stones of a crown lifted up, and as an ensign upon the land.* O what a day think ye will it be, when Christ shal hold your crowns upon his hand, and shal put them upon those heads never to be removed again: here we are often put to sigh out that lamentation, *The crown is fallen from our heads; wo unto us, for we have sinned:* but there shal be no sin to make our crown to totter. 2. I must tel you, there is a fourfold sute of apparel that ye shal be cloathed with ere long: ye are now cloathed with *heavinesse*; but then ye shal be cloathed with the *garments of praise*. And did ye ever know such a robe as that? Is it not a more excellent robe, then the robes of Kings and Emperors in the earth, to be cloathed with praises. Many of them are and shal be for ever cloathed with infamy and shame. 2. Ye shal be cloathed with change of rayment, and shal be brought unto the King *in rayment of needle work*. O poor lasse and poor lad, that sitteth upon the dung-hill, that

that knows not what it is to have change of apparel, ye ſhal have it in that day, when Chriſt ſhal ſolemnize the marriage with you; ye ſhal misken your ſelf. O chriſtian! if ye knew your ſelf never ſo wel, ye will be forced to cry out: *O is this I? Is this I, that am now made perfect through his comelineſs.* 3. Ye ſhal be cloathed with the garments of *immortal glory*; ye that have your *foundation in the duſt, & dwel in the houſes of clay*, ye ſhal then *be cloathed with theſe robes of immortality, and cloathed upon with your houſe from heaven.* And laſtly, ye ſhal be cloathed with the garment of the *ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of chriſt.* O ſuch a majeſtick walk as ye will have, when ye ſhal have a ſcepter in one hand, a palm in the other, theſe robes put upon your back, and theſe crowns upon your heads, and then ſhal be walking through theſe ſtreets that are paved with gold. 3. I ſhal give you this word to think upon, that there are five things that ſhal be your exerciſe in heaven. 1. Ye ſhal be conſtantly taken up in wondering: If it be not preſumption for us to think a little, what is the exerciſe of chriſt and the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this; chriſt is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty: chriſt is looking upon them, and they upon him: and is it not true, that if chriſt be now raviſhed with one of our eyes, *Song 4. verſ. 9.* much more ſhal he be raviſhed when both our eyes ſhal be given to him, and ſhal eternally behold him, without going a whoring after other lovers. 2. Ye ſhal be continually in the exerciſe of praiſe: joy and light ſhal be flowing in, and admiration and praiſe ſhal be

be flowing out eternally; ye shal then sweetly warble upon these harps of God, and shal cry, *Hallelujah unto him that sitteth upon the Throne:* there shal be no discord there; there is a sweet and beautiful harmony amongst all these spiritual and heavenly Musicians. O but to hear them, it were a heaven, though we had not that blessed lot as to sing with them. 3. Ye shal be contiually taken up in the exercise of love: Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here, but love shal be your predominant grace when ye are there. O! is it not a mystery to take up these sweet emanations of love and of delight, that shal pass betwixt christ and you? Ye shal be infolding christ, and christ shal be infolding you. 4. Ye shal be continually beholding him. I think it hardly possible for the wife to remember her husband in heaven, though she loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that sitteth on the Throne; they will think it too low an object to be taken up with looking upon another in these relations: all will be ravished beholding him, and one another in him, and for him. O the blessed exercise of those that are now entered within that city, and within those gates, whose name is *praise*. 5. Ye shal be continually taken up in beholding; ye shal be alwayes knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endless mysteries and perfections of Jesus Christ. O such a study! Is it not pleasant always to be studying Christ? and will not these things perswade you?

And now but a word more to those that will not have this free offer: If ye wil not imbrace Christ & take

take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the ſtead of that perſon for ten thouſand worlds: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt, and take him for your portion, the ſtones of the wall of this houſe will bear witneſs againſt you, and they ſhal have a tongue to ſpeak againſt you, that ye have been invited to take him, and would not: Ere long that day is approaching, and is drawing near, when the Atheiſts and refuſers of Chriſt they ſhal change their faith, they ſhal change their love, they ſhal change their fear, and they ſhal change their joy, and they ſhal change their mind: ye ſhal change your faith, ye that are refuſers of Chriſt; for I know there are many that thinks they have cloſed vvith Chriſt, vvho never did cloſe vvith him: that faith ſhal flee away, and ye ſhal believe the contrarie: ye ſhal change your love, or at leaſt your opinion of your love: ye think ye love Chriſt, but ye imbrace him not. I vvill tell you vvhat vvill be your exerciſe, and I can tell you nothing ſo terrible: Chriſt ſhal eternally hate you, and ye ſhal eternally hate Chriſt: there ſhal be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore. O that dreadful word, *Zech.* 11.8. It ſhal then be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt; *My ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred me.* And ye ſhal change your fear; for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yet there the horror of God ſhal make you ſhake as a leaf, and ye ſhal change your light & your judgement. Ye do now undervalue Chriſt, and thinks him of nothing worth: when Chriſt is preſented to you, *there is no beauty why ye ſhould deſire him*: But, O think on that day when Chriſt ſhal ſit

down in the clouds, and ye ſhal ſee his beautiful face, every ray of which ſhal be able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be raviſhed with the ſight. O what will be your thoghts of him? And if the bleſſings of a crucified Savior come not upon you, then the eternal, the unſupportable vengence of Chriſt ſhal light upon your heads that would not condeſcend to take him: ye ſhal be curſed in your life, ye ſhal be curſed in your death, and ye ſhal be curſed after death; what ſay ye to it? Are ye content to take him? Ye may bleſs the day that ever ye were born, if ye could once come to cloſe with Chriſt. Now to him that hath the keyes of the houſe of *David*, that can open your hearts to give himſelf entrie, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON IV.

2. Peter 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three moſt glorious and excellent gifts that God hath beſtowed upon man: there is that comprehenſive gift of heaven, *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is ſo called, *John* 4. 10. & ſure ſuch a gift as that, ought in ſome ſenſe to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The ſecond Royal gift that the Lord hath given, is, the precious promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, which are given unto us thorow him. A Chriſtian

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that is united unto him by the blood of faith, he may write this above the head of every promiſe of the everlaſting covenãt, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *faith*, which is that grace that maketh uſe of the former two: and we conceive that our little making uſe of theſe three excellent gifts, is the great occaſion and cauſe why theſe four ſad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1. The evil of a ſilent conſcience, that though we be *profound to commit iniquity*, and do *love a reward under every green tree*, yet our conſciences doth not ſpeak nor reprove us: and if at any time they do ſpeak, yet there are ſome that are ſo poſſeſſed with a dumb and deaf ſpirit, they can neither hear what God doth ſpeak, nor can they hear their conſcience: 2. The evil of a ſilent rod: we know not the voice of our rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open *our ears to diſcipline, nor ſeal up our inſtruction.* 3. There is that evil of *ſilent mercies:* the mercies that we receive of God, we underſtand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, ſpeaking to us in an unknown tongue? And yet we may ſay, there is not a rod nor mercy a chriſtian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did underſtand it. And laſtly, there is that evil that hath befallen us: and alas, this is the cape-ſtone of all, a *ſilent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cryes, but turneth about the face of his Throne, *covering himſelf with a cloud in his anger*, ſo *that our prayers cannot paſs through.* Alace! may not each chriſtian of this time cry out, *Call me no more Naomi, but call me Marah, becauſe the*

Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. In ſhort, I think there are theſe two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Iſrael.* Firſt, that vve live vvithout ſight of God. And ſecondly, that vve live vvithout ſight of our ſelves, and all this is, becauſe vve live vvithout a ſight of theſe precious gifts, Chriſt and his promiſes.

But now to the words. We told you, that in them there were theſe four things holden forth cõcerning the promiſes. 1. The original and fountain of the promiſes, in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom.* 2. The properties of the promiſes vvhich vve told you, vvere theſe four. The firſt vvas, that the promiſes vvere free, holden forth in that vvord, they are *given*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant being the noble gifts of God. The ſecond (of vvhich vve are to ſpeak at this time) is this, that the promiſes of the covenant they are *unchangeable*, vvhich is imported alſo in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed vvithout repentance. And as to this: 1. We ſhal prove the truth of the point, and for this end, conſider that place, *Numb.* 23. 19. vvhich vvas a part of *Balaams* ſong; *Hath he not ſpoken it, and will he not alſo do it? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhal it not alſo come to paſs.* And *Pſal.* 39. 34. *I will not break my covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*; and the point is clear alſo from the name that the promiſes getteth in Scripture, are they not called, *The ſure mercies of David? Iſaiah* 55. 3. And Are they not ſometimes in Scripture called *truth*, as we may ſee from *Micah* 7. 20. Thirdly, the nature of the covenant proveth it, in that it is called, *an everlaſting*

laſting covenant, and ſometimes *a covenant of ſalt*, becauſe that covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrifaction. And fourthly, it may be likewiſe ſhown from the conſtant experience, that the Saints have had of the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes. This *Joſhua* taketh notice of, *chap.* 23. 14. vvhere vvhen he vvas dying, *There hath not failed*, ſaith he, *one thing of all theſe good things that God hath ſpoken*; and he is ſo confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that vvord over again in that *verſe*, and he taketh notice of it, *Joſh.* 21. 45. vvhere he hath the ſame expreſſion again: *There hath not failed*, ſaith he, *one thing of all the good things that God hath ſpoken*: & this *Solomõ* he took notice of, 1. *Kings* 8. 56. *There hath not failed one thing that God hath ſpoken unto us by Moſes*: and indeed there is near ſix thouſand years experience that preacheth this truth, *The promiſes are unchangeable*; ſo that vve may now ſay: The *word of the Lord is tryed as ſilver purified in a furnace of earth hot ſeven times*. If there had been any falſhood in the precious promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, ſix thouſand years tryal ſhould have brought it to light: but doth not every one of the cloud of vvitneſſes that hath gone before us, leave this teſtimony upon record: *Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who will alſo do it*: his *promiſe is with the night, and with the day*, it cannot be altered: the ordinances of heaven continue to this day; much leſs can this covenant of love be broken or altered: only vve would have you taking this caution by the way, that there are ſome conditional promiſes that God paſſeth unto his people, vvhich in the depths of his

ſpotleſs wiſdom, he doth not accompliſh unto thoſe who never fulfil the cõdition: ſuch was that promiſe that he gave to the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Egypt*, of their poſſeſſing the land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderneſs. And hence is that ſtrange word, *Num.* 14.34. *Ye ſhal know my breach of promiſe, ſaith the Lord*; which is a word ſpoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpoſe in God, but only ſhewing that becauſe they did not believe, and ſo fulfil the condition of the promiſe, therefore it was not to be fulfilled perſonally to them.

The ſecond thing that we ſhal ſpeak to upon this; that the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhal be to propoſe theſe ſix golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is built. And the firſt of them is, the *Omnipotency of God*, that there is nothing he hath promiſed, but he is able to effectuat and to bring to paſs: Therefore, 2. *Cor.* 6. 18. when God hath been paſſing many excellent promiſes, he ſtrengthneth their faith with this, *Thus ſaith the Lord God Almighty*; and no doubt, *where the word of this King is, there is power; and who can ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* O misbeliever of the precious promiſes of the covenant! be aſhamed to caſt up your eyes to heaven above, or to the earth beneath; we think the ſtarres, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may ſpeak that to you, do not misbelieve God, but truſt in him, *That is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*. The ſecond is, the wiſdom and infinit counſel of God: he hath not only compleat ability to accompliſh the promiſe that he hath given,

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but he hath the depths and treaſures of knowledge, by which he hath contrived the way of the accompliſhment of ſuch a promiſe. Hence is that word, 2. *Sam.* 23. 5. that the covenant it is well ordered, which ſpeaketh out the wiſdom of God; and then that word is ſubjoined, the covenant *is ſure*; yea the covenant of grace is ſuch a thing, that there is ſo much of the arte of heaven, ſo much of infinit wiſdom ſhining in it, that it is called, *The coũſel of God*, Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counſel.* The third golden pillar, is, the *infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accompliſh the promiſes, yet he will take an argument from his own love to make out ſuch a promiſe to us. There is ſometimes (if not always) nothing in us, but that which may ſpeak forth delays of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; but when God can bring no argumẽt from his own love, as *Deut.* 7. 7. 8. where giving a reaſon of the accompliſhment of many promiſes, and of his love to them; *I loved you*, ſaith he, *becauſe I loved you*; there being no reaſon that can be given of love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableneſs of the Promiſer*, that he is the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever, & without all alteration & ſhadow of change. Hence ye may ſee in *Exod.* 3. 3. 14. when God is repeating many precious promiſes unto *Moſes*, he (as it were) ſtrengthneth *Moſes* faith with this, *I am*, ſaith he, *that I am*; which we conceive to point forth the unchangeablneſs of God, that what he hath ſaid, he will certainly accompliſh in its own time; and though *the viſion do tarry, yet at laſt it*

ſhal ſpeak. The fifth is, *the faithfulneſs of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath ſpoken. Love it maketh the promiſes; the faithfulneſs and power of God accompliſheth the promiſes, and the infinit wiſdom of God chooſeth the moſt fit time for performing of them. Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 119 89.90. *Thy word, O Lord, is for ever ſetled in heaven*; and the ground of it is in the following verſe; *For thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations.* Hence you may ſee, that oftentimes when God is making promiſes to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs*, *Iſai.* 45.19. and *Iſai.* 63.1. O, muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made by the Father who is the God of truth? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son; that is, Truth it ſelf, and the *faithful Witneſs and Amen*? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are applyed by the holy Ghoſt, that is the *Spirit of truth*? And muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made known unto us by the Goſpel, that is the *Word of truth*? Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God; that he was unfaithful in the accompliſhment of his promiſes. O what a clear ſight of the faithfulneſs of God ſhal a Chriſtian get, when he ſhal be ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time and Eternity, then he will ſee God faithful in accompliſhing all his promiſes unto him from firſt to laſt. The laſt golden pillar is, *the Juſtice of God.* His Juſtice, it now putteth him to accompliſh his promiſes: mercy and righteouſneſs have now kiſſed each other. Hence is

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that word, 1. *John* 9. *He is juſt and faithful to forgive.* So that now the accompliſhment of the promiſes, it is not only an act of love, but it is an act of juſtice alſo. We confeſs indeed, love and mercy maketh the promiſes; but juſtice and truth alſo putteth God to the accompliſhment of them. Hence is that word, *Micah* 7.20. *To perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and is it truth to *Jacob?* It is in ſhort this, becauſe mercy made the promiſes to *Abraham*, but truth did accompliſh the promiſes to *Jacob.*

The third thing that we ſhal ſpeak to from this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhal be to preſs theſe ſix duties upon you from this point.

O Chriſtians & expectants of heaven, who have Chriſt in you, the hope of glory, rejoice and be exceeding glad that the promiſes are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is preſſed from this ground, *Heb.* 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have ſtrong conſolation.* There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Chriſtian from this, that the promiſes ſhal be accompliſhed in their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable*, it is ingraven upon the head of many a Chriſtians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our promiſes? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our bleſſedneſs? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we ſhal have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, & all things *unchangeable.* And we conceive, that if theſe two were believed, the truth of the promiſes, and the unchangeableneſs

of the promiſes; a Chriſtian might walk throgh this valley of tears with joy, and comfort himſelf in hope.

The ſecond duty we would preſs, is this, that ye would ſurceaſe and give over diſputings and carnal reaſonings about the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ſince the promiſes of God are unchangeable: ought not we with this, to ſilence misbelief, and all that blind humane reaſon can ſay: this is preſſed, *Heb.* 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all ſtrife.* Gods confirming of his covenant by an oath, it ought to cut ſhort the diſputings of misbelief: And here give me leave to point out a little theſe grounds upon which it is that Chriſtians doth ſo much diſpute the accompliſhment of promiſes, and to let you ſee how all theſe grounds may be anſwered from theſe ſix pillars that were given of their unchangeableneſs.

The firſt is, when diſpenſations ſeemeth to contradict the truth of the promiſes: the promiſe it ſpeaketh one thing, & diſpenſations ſeem to ſpeak another: and this is the occaſion that oftentimes chriſtians cry out, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore.* This is clear from the practice of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. when diſpenſations were upon the top of the accompliſhment, and truth of the promiſes, then misbelief it ariſeth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I ſhal one day fall by the hand of Saul*: And we conceive, that diſpenſations contradicting the truth of the promiſes, was the occaſion of his ſpeaking that word, *Pſal.* 116. 11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all men are liars.* And I would only ſay to you that diſpute the truth of the promiſes upon this account, that diſpenſations

ſations contradicteth them, do but conſider this; God in his way is not like unto you: Would ye know the time when the promiſes are neareſt their accompliſhment, it is then when we can leaſt ſee that they are to be accompliſhed: the promiſes are never nearer their performance, then when we think they are furtheſt off from it: And therefore let the faith of the Omnipotency of God uphold your ſpirit under ſuch a debate, then let diſpenſations ſpeak what they will, ye may anſwer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him*: I grant, this may try the ſtrength of the ſtrongeſt faith; yea, we find it hath made the beſt to ſtagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed: this was the ground of *Sarahs* miſbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. that when ſhe heard ſhe ſhould bear a ſon in her old age, ſhe laughed within her ſelf, and did, as it were, mock at ſuch a promiſe: and this was the ground of *Moſes* his unbelief, *Num.* 11. 21. 22. he did not ſee a probability that ſuch a multitude could be fed with fleſh, and therefore he did call in queſtion the truth of that promiſe: This was the ground of the misbelief of that Lord that is made mention, 2. *Kings* 7. 2. & this was the ground of *Zecharies* misbelief, *Luke* 1. 20. But I would only ſay to you that do ſo much conſult with probability in the exerciſe of your faith, theſe two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14. *verſe* of that 18. *chapter*: *Is there any thing too hard for God?* And 2. faith is never in its native and ſpiritual exerciſe, till once probabilities

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contradict the truth of the promise; then saith it is put upon the stage, and then saith doth act: but as long as saith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the strength of saith is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God. Sometimes a Christian will believe a promise, and before the accomplishmēt of the promise come, their hope will be darkned, their interest in Christ wil be obscured, and then do they quite their saith in adhering to the truth of that promise. These two are joined together, want of the saith of our interest, and want of saith of the accomplishment of the promise; as is clear from that word, *Psal.77.8. Is his mercies clean gone?* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoined, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of heaven, and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, & my beloved is mine.* It will be a hard and difficult task for him, if not impossible, to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is their mistaking the way how the promises are accomplished: there are some that suppose, that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise: but do not mistake it, betwixt your believing the promise and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark dayes intervening, according to that word in *Mark* 10. 30.

where

where Chriſt paſſing great promiſes to his diſciples, he, as it were, doth adde, do not miſtake me that ye ſhal have theſe promiſes without trouble and affliction, *Ye ſhal receive*, ſaith he, *an hundred fold in this life with perſecutions.* A Chriſtian when he believeth the promiſes, he muſt reſolve to have a winter before the ſpring time come; wherein the promiſes ſhal bud and flouriſh.

The fifth ground of a Chriſtians diſputing the truth of the promiſes, is, when the promiſes are long in their accompliſhing. A Chriſtian when firſt he meeteth with a promiſe, he will cry forth, *O, I believe*; but when time is taken for the accompliſhment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope begianeth to languiſh and give over; yea ſometimes Chriſtians they fall into this fault, when they believe a promiſe, they fix a day for the accompliſhment of it; which if God do not keep, but go over, then they immediatly cry forth, *What is my ſtrength that I ſhould wait? And what is my confidence that I ſhould prolong my dayes?* This is clear in the practiſe of *Abraham*, where the promiſe of having a numerous ſeed being given to him, *Gen.* 12. 2. the long time before that promiſe was accompliſhed in part to him, was the occaſion of his unbelief, that he vented, *Gen.* 15. 3. *O Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſince I go childleſs?* But ye muſt know, that before *the viſion ſhal ſpeak*, there is an appointed time that ye muſt wait, according to 1. *Pet.* 5. 9. 10. *After ye have ſuffered a while*, then the promiſes ſhal be accompliſhed, and ye ſhal be made perfect.

The ſixth ground upon which Chriſtians call in queſtion

queſtion the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is, The conſideration of the greatneſs of the thing that is promiſed, when they compare it with their own worth and deſerving, then they begin to diſpute, *O ſhal ſuch a thing be?* ſhal unworthy I, ſhal ſinful I, ſhal ſelf-deſtroying I, ſhal I that *am leſs then the leaſt of all his mercies*, receive the accompliſhmēt of ſuch a mercy? This we may ſuppoſe was one ground of *Abrahams* misbelief, *Gen.* 17. 18. when he cryed forth at that ſame time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promiſe of an *Iſaac*; *O that Iſhmael might live*! He thought an *Iſaac* ſuch an excellent mercy, that he could not without preſumptiō expect the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And in *Zech.* 8. 6. this was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth ſweetly obviate, *If it be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of this people in thoſe dayes, ſhould it alſo be wonderful in mine.*

The laſt ground upon which Chriſtians diſpute the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is, when in the time between their believing and the accompliſhment of the promiſe, they fall into ſome groſs iniquity; this maketh them exceedingly debate, whether the promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed unto them? for ſince they have tranſgreſſed the covenant of God, and have broken their purpoſes & reſolutions, they cannot ſuppoſe God will abide faithful to them, and once accompliſh his promiſes unto them; and the only way how to anſwer this diſpute, is, to look to the faithfulneſs of God, and uſe that word, 2. *Tim.* 2. 13: *Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himſelf.*

And now to ſhut up this ſecond duty that we

preſs from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes; I ſhal only ſay theſe two words unto you. 1. Aſſure your ſelves of this, that theſe accompliſhments of the promiſes that come not through the lively exerciſe of faith, doth looſe much of their ſweetneſs, much of their luſter, and much of their advantage. Sometimes a promiſe will be accompliſhed unto a Chriſtian, when he hath not been much in the conſtant lively exerciſe of faith in believing ſuch a promiſe: but then the diſadvantage that attendeth ſuch a one, are not eaſily expreſſed: How often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, and I was not aware?* How little of God doth he ſee in it? How ſhort is he in praiſes and rendering to the Lord according to the good he hath received? How negligent in improving or keeping the mercy? And how loath to lay it out for God, when he ſaith, *The Lord hath need of it?* And many things more of this kind, which may preſs us to be ſtedfaſt in believing. And 2. O diſpute leſs, and believe more, what profit ſhal ye have of your diſputings? And if ye would produce all your ſtrong arguments, why ye ſhould not believe the promiſes, ye may drown them in this immenſe depth, *God is unchangeable.* Let me ſay but this further, there are three moſt remarkable changes in a Chriſtian, in his making uſe of the promiſes. Firſt, ſometimes he will believe the promiſes, and make application of them; and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promiſe which preſently he believed. Will not ſometimes a Chriſtian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, and ere

twelve

twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my ſtrength is periſhed from the Lord.* Sometimes a Chriſtian in the morning will cry out, *My mountain ſtandeth ſtrong, I ſhal never be moved*; and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out, *Thou haſt hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Secondly, ſometimes a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *ſweeter then the honey and the honey comb:* Sometimes a Chriſtian would die and live upon the promiſe: Sometimes the believing of a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *as the valley of Achor for a door of hope*, that will make him to ſing, and yet ere many dayes go about, he may come to the ſame very promiſe, and it will prove taſteleſs to him as the *white of an egge*; ſo that he may cry out, *O that it were with me as in the moneths paſt, and in the ancient times.* And, O where is the ſweetneſs that I found in ſuch a promiſe? O it is gone, it is gone, and I am left deſolate. Thirdly, ſometimes when a Chriſtian will be believing ſuch a promiſe, and reſting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) ſee much light and clearneſs in that promiſe: he will take up *the deep things of God* that ſhineth therein; and at another time, he may come to that ſame promiſe, and it may be dark to him, ſo that his light hath evaniſhed: and ſometimes the joy of a Chriſtian in the promiſe will be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Chriſtian may come to the promiſe, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore if ye would have the promiſes alwayes ſweet unto you, pray over them,

pray

pray that God might breath upon such a promise, and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would press upon you from the unchangeableness of the promises, is that which by proportion ye may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*; these two are conjoined: yea, *Joshua* seemeth to inter the unchangeableness of the threatnings, from the unchangeablenese of the promises, *chap.* 23. 14. compared with *verse* 15. and these are conjoined, *Zech.* 8. 14. 15. *That as I thought to punish you, and it hath come to pass, so I have thought to build you up, and it shal come to pass.* And I would from this desire you to stand in awe, lest you come under the lash of the unchangeable threatnings of God; for know, that as God is unchangeable in the promises, & there is not one word in all the everlasting covenat that shal not be accomplished; so likewise know, there is not a curse in all the Book of the covenant, but it shal be accomplished in its time: And know this likewise, that the day is coming when that sad word that is in *Hos.* 7. 12. shal be accomplished: *I will chastise them, as their Congregation hath heard.* And, O ye that live in this place, if all the threatnings that your Congregation hath heard, shal be accomplished in their time, ye may take up the last words of *Balaams* song, alace, *Who shal live when God shal do these things?* And therefore since the threatnings of God are unchangeable, as also the promises, life and death is set before you; and either ye shal be the object of the unchangeable threatnings of God, or ye must be the object of the unchan-

unchangeable promiſes of God: And therefore I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpful to the deſtruction of your immortal ſouls, you would not undervalue the threatnings that ye hear in your Congregations, ſince there is a declaration paſt, that the threatnings in your Congregations ſhal be accompliſhed.

Now there is that fourth duty that we wold preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiſer*; let this commend the *Promiſer*; let this conſtrain your hearts to delight in the *Promiſer*. O what a bleſſed diſpenſation of love is this, that an unchangeable God ſhould make unchãgeable promiſes unto changeable creatures. If the promiſes of the covenant of grace were as changeable in their nature as we are changeable, there ſhould not one of us go to heaven: but know, it is the bleſſed deſign of love, and it hath been a bleſſed practice of the infinit wiſdom of God, that when he hath to do with chãgeable creatures, he will give them unchangeable promiſes. And I would once invite you again, that ye would come near and imbrace this *unchangeable Promiſer*. I ſhal ſpeak theſe five words that may perſwade you. Firſt, Chriſt is eaſily to be gotten, if ye will take him; ye will get Chriſt, if ye will but hear; yea, for one liſtening of your ear to his voice, ye ſhal get him; according to that word, *Iſa.* 55. 3. *Hear*, and what of that? and *your ſoul ſhal live*. Is not this to get Chriſt at an eaſie rate: and as we ſpake before, ye will get Chriſt for a look; and is not that an eaſie rate, *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and*

and be ſaved. Have ye a deſire to take Chriſt, ye ſhal get him for that deſire, according to that word, *Iſai.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, let him come; and he that wills, let him come.* Will ye but conſent for to take him, ye ſhal have him; and what can you have at a lower rate then this? Shal never your curſed hands take the pen, and put to your name to the bleſſed contract of marriage? Shal never theſe curſed hearts of ours cry forth, *Even ſo I take him,* and do promiſe to live to him, and to die to him. O ſtrange! will ye not do it? Upon what tearms would the world have Chriſt? Is it poſſible to have him without a conſent to take him? Oh! if ye would but open to him, he would condeſcend to come in unto you, and to ſup with you, and ye with him: do ye but ſtir to open, Chriſt hath the keyes in his own hand, and he will help you to open. O what if Chriſt the precious gift of heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that branch of righteouſneſs ſhal be deſpiſed, being offered upon ſo eaſie tearms! then curſed eternally ſhal be that perſon that thus undervalueth Chriſt; it had been better for him that he had never been born. Curſed ſhal you be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death: all the curſes of the Perſons of the Trinity will light upon you, yea believe it. O wife that hath a believing husband, in the day that the great ſentence of eternal excommunication from the preſence of the Lord, ſhal be paſt againſt the undervaluers of Chriſt, a believing husband will ſay Amen, to that ſentence, even to his wife that did thus undervalue that noble Plant of renown: And

the wife upon the other part, will say with hearty consent Amen, to that Sentence against the unbelieving husband, and the father to the son, and the son to the father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would press upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, that ye would be perswaded to make the promises your portion and your inheritance: What can ye want that will choise the promises for your portion? I know our cursed eyes doth not love to make invisible promises; and that invisible crown, and an invisible God our portion, we love to walk by sight, not by faith. But, oh, if you knew once what it were but to claim a relation to Christ! Did ye once know what it were to have but Christ a moment between your breasts, ye would cry forth: *O! who would not love him that is the King of Saints?* Who would not be content to quite all things, that they might get Christ, that noble pearl of price.

And there is this last duty that we would press upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, read a lecture from off this, O Christian even your misbelief: God hath confirmed his everlasting covenant with *an oath*, with the *blood of his Son*, by the two great broad Seals of heaven, *the Sacrament of Baptism*, and *the Lords Supper*. And what doth all these confirmations speak, but our dreadful misbelief, and that we know not what it is to be resting on a naked word of promise. I shal say no more, but desire that ye would consider and take notice of these three. First, ye have been solemnly and often invited by the Ambassadors of Christ, to close

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with him, and to take him for your husband, and your Lord; and will you conſider preſently, that all the Angels in heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three moſt glorious, moſt bleſſed Perſons of the Trinity, that they are witneſſes, and ſhal be to your diſſent. And are there not many here whoſe hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty conſent to cloſe with Chriſt that is the great Promiſer, and who hath laid all the bonds that heaven or earth could contrive to gain ſinners hearts unto himſelf. O precious Chriſt! what could he do to perſwade us to love him which he hath not done? and yet that may be your name, which is in *Eph* 2.2. *Children of diſobedience*, or as the word is, children of *imperſwaſion*; we cannot be perſwaded. Secondly, I fear if Chriſt himſelf would come from heaven, and invite you, and ſay; Here am I, imbrace me; there are ſome here who would cloſe not only their eyes, but their ears; they would cloſe their eyes, leſt the beauty of Chriſt ſhould allure them; they would cloſe their curſed ears, leſt they ſhould be gained and captivat by the ſweet enchaunting voice of that bleſſed Charmer, when he ſhould charm ſo wiſely. And laſtly, wilt thou tell me, O Chriſtian, and expectant of heaven! what a day ſhal it be when all the unchangeable promiſes of God ſhal be accompliſhed? What a day ſhal it be when that promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhal ſee him as he is?* What a day ſhal it be when that promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhal be made like unto him?* What a day ſhal it be when that promiſe ſhal be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhal know as ye are known?* O are ye not longing for

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the day of the full accompliſhment of the precious promiſes of God, when ye ſhal ſit down and comfort your ſelves in the eternal and unſpeakable fruition of them? O let us long and wait till the day ſhal be, when that voice ſhal be heard in heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* O how unwilling are we to leave a world! And how gladly would we take up our reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*! I think, if this were the night that that bleſſed voice were to be heard in heaven, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him*; ſome, if not many of the Chriſtians (that are ſo indeed) in this time would cry forth; *Oh! ſpare a little, that we may recover ſtrength, before we go hence, and ſhal be no more.* Are ye not longing to bring the King over *Jordan*, and to bring him home to your ſelf, and to have your heart brought home to him? O bleſſed bleſſed are theſe that are above! *Is not the voice of theſe that ſhout for victory* heard amongſt them? Is not the voice of theſe *that ſing for joy* heard amongſt them? *Job* doth not now any more complain, *Why doſt thou make me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth, and ſetteſt a print upon my heels? David* doth now no more complain, *Why doth thy promiſe fail for evermore?* but rather doth ſweetly ſing, How is thy *promiſe fulfilled for evermore? Heman* doth now no more complain, *While I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted:* but rather cryeth out, While I feel thy comforts, I am raviſhed. The voice of mourning is now ſweetly gone away, and the voice of hallelujah, and of eternal praiſing of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, is now heard in the place of it. O

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ſuch a day that ſhal never admit of a following night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come, and ſhal come, and ſhal not tarry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON V.

2. Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three cardinal and excellent graces that are exerciſed and taken up with the precious promiſes: there is the excellent grace of faith, that believeth the truth and the goodneſs of the promiſe: there is the precious grace of Hope, that with patience waiteth for the accompliſhment of the promiſe, and doth ſtay until the viſion ſpeak: and that noble grace of Love, that loveth the thing that is promiſed, and taketh exceeding much delight in the Promiſer. If we may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, we think theſe ſtrange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Eccleſiaſtes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptineſs of all things that are here below God. And we do indeed conceive, that it is the great deſign of God in the darkning of our pleaſant things, and in making *every gourd to wither*, under the ſhadow of which we uſe to repoſe our ſelf, & in *famiſhing all the Gods of the earth*, to bring his own to delight themſelves in this inviſible treaſure, *the promiſes of the everlaſting* cove-

covenant, and in him who is the ſubſtance of them; and that ſince all things elſe are declared to be vanity, we might choiſe theſe as our portion for ever.

At the laſt occaſion that vve ſpake upon theſe vvords, vve vvere ſpeaking unto the properties of the promiſes; and vve told you that there vvere four of them holden forth. 1. *The fredom of the promiſes.* 2. *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſes*, of which two vve have ſpoken unto you; and now there remains other two to be ſpoken to, to wit, that the promiſes they are *exceeding great*, & that they are *exceeding precious*, a ſweet and excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatneſs and goodneſs here kiſſing one another, preciouſneſs and highneſs linked together by the bond of Union. And vve ſhal ſpeak unto theſe two properties together, and ſhal clear a little this thing, in vvhat reſpects the promiſes of the covenant may be called exceeding great and precious: And vve conceive in ſhort, they may be called ſo in theſe eight reſpects. Firſt, they are exceeding great, in reſpect of the great price that vvas laid down to purchaſe them, there not being a promiſe of the everlaſting covenant, above the head of which this may not be engraven in great letters, *Here is the price and purchaſe of blood*: and no doubt this ought highly to commend the promiſes, that they are bought at ſo infinite a rate. Muſt they not be great and precious things that ſo wiſe a Merchant did lay down ſo infinite a treaſure for the purchaſing of them? 2. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect of thoſe great & precious things that are promiſed in them. Is not godlineſs a great thing

thing? and this is within the boſom of a promiſe. Is not heaven and eternal enjoyment of God, a great and precious thing? and yet this lyeth within the boſom of a promiſe. Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over our idols, great and excellent things? and yet all theſe are treaſured up in the promiſes. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect of the great advantage that redounds to a Chriſtian through the enjoyment of them. The promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant (if ſo we may ſpeak) are the penſils that draws the draughts and lineaments of the Image of Chriſt upon the ſoul: It is the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, *by which we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord:* And as *Peter* doth here ſpeak, the promiſes are ſuch things whereby we are made *partakers of the divine nature.* 4. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect of that near relation that they have unto Jeſus Chriſt. What are all the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace? Are they not precious ſtreams and rivulets that flow from Jeſus Chriſt? Chriſt is the fountain, out of which all theſe promiſes do ſpring: and can this fountain that is ſweet in it ſelf, ſend forth any bitter waters? Muſt they not be precious things that hath ſuch a noble deſcent, as to be ſtreams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, and from him unto us, as the pouring out of the oyntment upon the head of *Aaron*, which ran down the beard unto the skirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promiſes, in reſpect they, or

rather Christ in them, are the object of precious faith. What is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promises of the Covenant, and Christ the kernil of them? What are these things that faith taketh so much delight in, and is supported by? Is it not the promises of the Covenant. 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Christ. There is not a promise within the book of the Covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, O come to Christ. The promises are indeed that star that leadeth us unto the house where Christ doth ly, and there is no access unto Jesus Christ but by a promise: Christ is to be found there, for he dwells within the bounds of the everlasting Covenant, and there he will tryst with his people, and be found of them. And 7. they may be called exceeding precious, in respect that the Saints have found such sweetnes, and such unspeakable delight in the promises. Did not *David* find a great sweetnes in the promises when he cryed forth, *The words of thy mouth are better to me, then thousands of gold and silver?* Did he not find much sweetnes in the promises, when he was constrained to cry out, *Thy Law is sweeter unto me, then the honey and the honey comb? David* in a manner was put to a *non plus*, to find out any suitable similitude and significant resemblance, to point out the sweetnes of the promises: though we may say the Christians of this time are in a spiritual fever, they have lost their spiritual taste, so that they may say, if we may allude unto that word, 2. *Sam.* 19. 25. *I am this day four score yea*

years old, and cannot discern betwixt good and evil: can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink. They know not what it is to be overcome with the sweetness that is to be found in these excellent streams of divine consolation. Lastly, the promises may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and matchless account of them: Hence that word is here rendered *precious*, may likewise be rendered *honorable*, which speaketh forth that there is nothing that hath so much of the esteem of a Christian as the promises. Would ye put wisdom, or riches, or honor, or what ye will, in the ballance with the promises, they would cry forth, what should I profite to gain all these, if I lose the promises? We shal say no more of this, but that the promises are indeed that apple, the eating of which would make us, in some respect (and in humility be it spoken) *as God, knowing good and evil.* The promises are these things that doth elevate the soul unto a divine conformity with God. And, oh! that this might be the fruit of them, the promises are as cords let down to souls sinking in *the myry clay, and in the horrible pit*; do but lay hold upon them, and ye shal undoubtedly be drawn up, and he shal set *your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to speak of the third thing in the words, which is the advantage and unspeakable gain that floweth to a Christian throgh the promises, holdē forth in these words, *that by them ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*; which words doth not hold forth, that there is any substantial change of our natures unto the essence of God: but

only it holds forth this, that the ſoul that is taken up in believing of the promiſes, doth ariſe unto a likeneſs and conformity to him in holineſs, wiſdom, and righteouſneſs. And as to theſe advantages that come to a Chriſtian through the promiſes. 1. We muſt lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promiſes, and in making application of them.

And the firſt is, that they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent and neceſſary work of mortification: this is clear from the words of the Text; as likewiſe from 2. *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promiſes have upon Sanctification, may be ſhown unto you in theſe three. Firſt, they lay upon a Chriſtian a divine bond and obligation to ſtudy holineſs: that ſince Chriſt hath ſignified and teſtified his reſpects unto us, in ſo ample and large a way as to give ſuch precious promiſes, we ought to endeavor to ſtudy holineſs, which is that great reward of love that he ſeeketh from us, for all things that he hath beſtowed, and we receive; and this is the meaning of that, 2. *Cor.* 7. 1. Secondly, the ſtrength and furniture of a Chriſtian, for fulfilling and accompliſhing of the work of Sanctification, lyeth within the promiſes. Are not the promiſes of God unto a Chriſtian, as *Samſons locks*, in which their great ſtrength doth ly; and if once they cut themſelves off from the promiſes through misbelief, their ſtrength doth decay, and they become as other men.

Where

Where muſt the Chriſtian go to for ſtrength? Is it not to the promiſe? Is it not to the Name of the Lord? Yea, this is the ſtrength of a Chriſtian unto which he muſt reſort continually. And thirdly, the promiſes of God they hold forth that unſpeakable reward that attendeth that Chriſtian that ſhal ſtudy holineſs. There are ſeveral promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant that cryeth forth to the Chriſtian, to him that overcometh will this promiſe be accompliſhed, to him that overcometh ſhal this truth be fulfilled: and this doth exceedingly provoke a Chriſtian to wreſtle with all his diſcouragements he meeteth with in the way: he burieth his anxieties within the cercle of his immortal Crown: he hopeth for, and ſeeth in the promiſe; and hope maketh him diſpence with his wants: his expectation maketh him overcome his fears; and his looked for joy, maketh him to diſpence with his ſorrows.

The ſecond advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes do help a Chriſtian to a ſpiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withall maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2. *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* believing the promiſes, it is ſubjoined, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer to God:* And if any will look unto the words of that prayer, they will ſee them running in a heavenly and ſpiritual ſtrain, ſpeaking him one much acquainted with God, and under moſt high and majeſtick apprehenſions of his glory; as is clear alſo, *Pſal.* 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed:* as if *David* had ſaid, Would you know what made me thus fervent and diligent

in prayer, it was that I hoped in his word; and hence it is that he hath so many prayers in that *Psalm*; all were occasioned through the faith of the promises, as for instance, when he cryed forth, *Quicken me according to thy word: be merciful unto me according to thy word.* And we conceive, the faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer to these four divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him pray with faith: when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promises, then he venteth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psal.* 65. 3. where ye may see a man believing, and praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely, in these words: *As for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away*: it is not said, *thou wilt purge them away*, or we desire that thou should purge them away, but *thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldness of faith. A Christian that believeth the promises, he can take the promise in his hand and present it unto God, and say, fulfil this promise since thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Christian pray with much humility; for when he doth understand that there is nothing that he hath, but it is the fruit and accomplishment of a promise, he doth not boast as those that have not received; but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen.* 32. 10. where we may see *Jacob* speaking to God with much humility, and in the 9. we see, he is speaking to God with much faith. And 3. it maketh a Christian pray with much love: would you know the great ground that we are so remiss

remiſs in the exerciſe of love in prayer? It is, becauſe we build not our prayers upon the promiſes. And 4. it helpeth a Chriſtian to pray with much fervency: When was it that *David* cryed to God? Was it not when he was believing the promiſe that was paſt to him of old? We would not plead with God with ſuch remiſneſs, if we did believe the promiſes that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes doth ſometimes uphold a Chriſtian under his ſpiritual diſertions and temptations. Is it not certain that ſometimes he hath been ready to draw that concluſion, I am caſt out of his ſight, & ſhal no more behold him in the land of the living, when a promiſe that hath been born in upō his ſpirit; hath ſupported him and made him to change his ſong, and to invert his concluſion? This is clear from *Pſal.* 94. 18. when I ſaid, *my foot ſlippeth*, there is the concluſion of misbelief & diſpair; *yet thy mercy, O Lord, did hold me up*; there is the gate at which faith doth bring in conſolation, not from bygone experience only; but certainly from that which he found in ſome precious promiſes that was born in upon his ſpirit. Many excellent cords of love hath Chriſt let down unto a ſoul, when they have been going down into the depths, & the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: it is clear likewiſe from *Pſalm* 119.81. *My ſoul fainteth for thy ſalvation:* as if *David* had ſaid; I am in hazard to give over my hope, and to break my confidence: and would ye know what it was that ſupported me under ſuch an eſtate, *I hoped in thy word*: hath not this oftentimes bee-

the ſong of a Chriſtian in their darkeſt night: *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my ſoul.* Faith will ſee a morning approaching in the time of the greateſt trouble: and no doubt that promiſe that upholdeth a Chriſtian in their doubting and misbelieving condition, the lively impreſſions of that promiſe will remain a long time with him; and when firſt it is born in upon their ſpirits, they will ſee no ſmal love ſhining forth, in carving out ſuch a promiſe to ſuit with ſuch a providence, as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promiſes, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience and divine ſubmiſſion under our ſaddeſt outward afflictions: this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living*: and from *Pſal.* 119.49.50. where *David* telling his exerciſe in the 49. *I hope*, ſaith he, *in thy word.* Immediatly he ſubjoineth, *This is my comfort in mine affliction*: as if he had ſaid, If I had not had the promiſes to be my comforters, I had ſit alone and kept ſilence, and ſhould have remained without comfort in the day of mine adverſity, and *verſe* 92. *Unleſs thy Law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in mine afflictions*: And we conceive in ſhort, the influence which faith upon the promiſes hath upon the patient bearing of the croſs, may be ſhown unto you in theſe two particulars. Firſt, faith it is an excellent Prophet, that alwayes propheſieth unto us good things. Would ye enquire at faith at your midnight

of

of affliction, what is its opinion of God, and of your own estate? Faith would sweetly resolve you thus; *Wait on God, for I shal yet praise him for the health of his countenance.* Faith knoweth not what it is to have wrong constructions of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Christians cross. If sense, reason, and misbelief interpret your cross, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto me as an enemy*, or *as a liar, and waters that fail?* But if faith, that noble interpreter, do interpret your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are the thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its Divinity. I sow in tears, but I shal reap in joy: *Weeping may be at evening*, saith faith, *but joy shal come in the morning.* Secondly, it affordeth unto a Christian such soul-refreshing consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that in a manner they forget their sorrows, *as waters that pass away*: this *David* doth divinely assert in *Psal.* 119. 50. *This is my comfort in mine affliction.* The faith of the promises are indeed that tree, which if they be cast into the waters of *Marah, they will make them immediatly become sweet.*

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth help a Christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim, as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 13. where these two are sweetly linked together, the imbracing of the promises by faith, and confessing *that they were strangers and pilgrims*

here on earth. And we shal show the influence that faith hath upon this, in these three. 1. It maketh a Christian see the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Globe of the World, that *is not vanity and vexation of spirit.* Faith is that prospect through which a Christian hath most clear discoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Christian see the endless perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within sight of that immense and everlasting hope; and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, and to declare plainly that *he seeketh a Countrey.* And 3. it doth exceedingly help him forward in that blessed work of weaning of affections from all things that are here. Would ye know where a believers *heart* is? It is in heaven. Would ye know where his *thoughts* are? They are in heaven. Would ye know where his *conversation* is? It is in heaven. Would ye know where his *hope* is? It is in heaven, his *treasure* is in heaven, and therefore his heart and conversation is there, *and Christ in him is the hope of glory.* And indeed more faith of the promiser would constrain us all to subscribe that *Confession of Faith* that is in *Heb.* 11. 13.

The sixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promises, is, that it is the mother of much spiritual joy and divine consolation, and maketh a Christian to be much in the exercise of praise: this is clear from *Psal.* 71. 14. *But I will hope continually;* and then immediatly is subjoined, *And will yet praise him more and more.* As likewise from *Rom.*

15.

15. 13. and from 1. *Peter* 1.8. If a man would have his way to heaven made pleasant, and while they are sitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *sing one of the songs of Zion*; then ought they to believe the promises, and to *choose them as their heritage for ever*; and then he may sing in hope, and praise in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the present: Indeed when he looketh to his possession, there will not be so much matter of rejoicing; but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be constrained to cry forth: *Awake up, O my glory; I my self will awake early.*

The seventh advantage is, that the faith of the promises is a notable mean to attain unto spiritual life: this is clear from *Isa.* 38. 16. *By these things*, saith *Ezekiah*, *do men live* (speaking of the promises) *and in all these things is the life of my spirit.* As likewise from *Psalm* 119. 50. *Thy words*, saith *David*, *hath quickened me.* O what spiritual and divine life doth attend that Christian that is much in the exercise of faith upon the promises! And what is the great occasion that *our hearts* are oftentimes *dying within us like a stone*, and we are like unto those that *are free amongst the dead?* is it not because we do not make use of the promises.

Eighthly, there is that advantage, that faith of the promises, it maketh a Christian have an esteem of the thing that is promised. What is the reason that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlasting Covenant, this is a *Zaar*, a little one? Is it not because we do not

believe

believe? Great things sometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comlineſs that appeareth in them why they ſhould be deſired: but if we had ſo much faith as *a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, How excellent are theſe things that are purchaſed to the Saints! And how eternally are they made up that have a right but to one line of the everlaſting Covenant, *That it is well ordered in all things, and ſure.*

And ninthly, the faith of the promiſes is the door at which the accompliſhment of the promiſes doth enter in: according to that word, *Luke* 1.45. *Bleſſed are they that believe, for there ſhal be a performance of theſe things that are ſpoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accompliſhment of his promiſes, *the viſion ſhould ſpeak, and ſhould not tarry.* And no doubt, a mercy coming to us, as the fruit and performance of a promiſe, will make it an exceedingly refreſhful thing; when a Chriſtian getteth leave to ſing that ſong which is in *Iſai.* 25.9. *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will come and ſave us.* And when a mercy is the fruit and accompliſhment of the promiſe, there is a beautiful luſter and dye upon that mercy, which no arte could ſet on, but only the finger of the love of God. The ſmalleſt mercy then becometh a matchleſs myſtery of love; and the moſt matchleſs myſteries of love, without the exerciſe of faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praiſe them. Faith maketh our thoughts to aſcend, and misbelief maketh our thoughts to deſcend, in relation

relation to the precious mercies of heaven.

Laſtly, beſides all theſe advantages, we have theſe two mentioned in the Text. 1. That by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, and are brought up unto that bleſſed conformity with God, which we had loſt in the fall. 2. That by them we eſcape the corruptions in the world through luſt: I intend not particularly to open up the nature of theſe things at this time, becauſe I am only to ſpeak to the exerciſe of faith in the promiſes. But, O what excellent mercies are theſe, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off theſe ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our ſouls? O how ſhould this commend the promiſes unto us, that by faith in them, we do *all behold with open face, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now that which ſecondly we ſhal ſpeak to, ſhal be the advantages that reſults to a Chriſtian from a ſpiritual obſervation of the Lords accompliſhing his promiſes; for here ye ſee in the Text, the Apoſtle maketh an obſervation of theſe excellent things that are the fruit of theſe precious promiſes, when they are accompliſhed. And the firſt advantage is, that it ſtampeth the ſoul of a believer with moſt divine impreſſions of love: this is clear, *Iſai.* 38. 15. where *Hezekiah* cryeth out, *What ſhal I ſay, he hath both ſpoken it, and himſelf hath done it*; being, as it were, aſtoniſhed and overcome with the apprehenſions of the condeſcendency of God, he is put to a *non plus*, and to *what ſhal I ſay, Pſal.* 48. 8. 9. *As we*

have

have heard (ſaith *David*) *ſo have we ſeen in the City of the Lord of Hoſts*, that is, according to his promiſe, vve have had ſuitable performance: and he ſubjoyneth, ver. 9. that vvhich was both their exerciſe and their advantage, *We have thought of thy loving kindneſs, O God, in the midſt of thy Temple*; as it vvere, the obſervation of the performance of the promiſe, made their thoughts vvholly to be taken up vvith the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promiſe, then eternity were ſufficient to make a cómentary upon. It is one vvonder of condeſcendency, that God ſhould oblidge and bind himſelf to us by promiſes: and another depth of vvonderfull love, that he ſhould perform theſe bonds, and anſvver his vvords vvith performance.

The ſecond advantage is, That the obſerving of accompliſhment of promiſes doth bring in to the ſoul nevv diſcoveries of God: this is clear, *Exod. 6. 3.* vvhere God thus ſpeaketh to *Moſes*, *I was known* (ſaith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of the Almighty, but by the Name of Jehovah was I not known unto them*, that is, by the Name of giving an accompliſhment unto my promiſes, that Name vvas not diſcovered unto them, but ſhould be made known unto their poſterity, in the day when his promiſes ſhould paſſe unto performances. And hence it is alſo, that vvhen the Lord is ſpeaking of the accompliſhment of great promiſes, he doth ſo often in the Scripture ſubjoyn that vvord, *Ye ſhall know that I am Jehovah*, or *the Lord*, *Iſa. 49. 23, 52.*

and

and 60. 16. And indeed vve do daily find it ſo; for, is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe, a nevv diſcovery of the *wiſdome of God*, that ſhineth in the ſuitable tyming of the accompliſhment of a promiſe: Is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe a nevv diſcovery of the *faithfulneſſe of God*, that he vvill not alter that vvhich hath gone out of his mouth? And is not every performance of the promiſes a nevv diſcovery of the *love of God*, that he deſireth to magnifie his mercies above all his works, and a nevv diſcovery of the *power* and *omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promiſe, notwithſtanding of all things that are in the vvay, yea, *make things that are not, to be, and bring to nought things that are.*

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a chriſtian to have high apprehenſions, and majeſtick up-takings of God: this is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. compared vvith v. 17. vvhere *Paul* cloſing vvith that promiſe, that *Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners*, and beholding in the accompliſhment of it, in himſelf, his heart (as it were) is elevated vvithin him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen.* There is an Emphaſis in that vvord *now*, as if *Paul* ſaid, I could never praiſe and extoll him till *now*, and I am ſo much bound to Chriſt, that I vvill not delay this exerciſe one moment, *now* I vvill bleſſe him: and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. vvhere the accompliſhment of the promiſes that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like*

unto

unto thee, he became matchleſs unto them through the performance of the promiſes. And ſo we conceive that theſe who are much in ſpiritual obſervation of the performance of the promiſes, they will ſee precious draughts of the Majeſty of God engraven upon them; ſo that they will be conſtrained to cry out, that he above *is mighty*, *and that his Name is Jehovah*, *and in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, upon which we ought to rely in our greateſt ſtraits.

The fourth advantage is, the obſerving of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, will help a Chriſtian when he is redacted unto new ſtraits, to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon God; his former experience will produce hope in his ſoul; for there is not one diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God, but hath a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear being unto his word: this is clear from *Pſal.* 56. at the cloſe. *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, ſaith *David*, and then he ſubjoineth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perſwaded, thou wilt likewiſe perform that word unto me. And from *Pſalm* 37. 2. 3. he giveth that title unto God, *verſ.* 2. that he *performeth all things for him:* and then he doth ſubjoin, *He ſhal ſend from heaven and ſave me*: and (by the way) the ſoul that can give God that title and ſtile, *That he performeth all things for them*, that ſoul muſt of neceſſity be in a choiſe and excellent eſtate. And the point is clear likewiſe from 2. *Cor.* 1. 10. where *Paul* ſaith, *God hath delivered me*, *and he doth*

deliver

deliver me; and from hence he draweth that concluſion of faith, *And he will yet deliver me.* We confeſs, ſometimes our former experiences of the faithfulneſs of God, they do not ſupport our faith when we are redacted unto new difficulties, which is either occaſioned through the greatneſs of the ſtrait that we are now put to (in our apprehenſions) above that which we were put to before; ſo that though God did deliver us when *we were running with foot-men*, yet we have no faith to believe that he ſhal deliver us when we are *about to contend with horſes:* or elſe it is, through the unfaithfulneſs of our walk, in not anſwering the precious dipenſations of Chriſt, in accompliſhment of his promiſes; for this maketh us that we cannot with boldneſs make uſe of his Word when we are brought into a new ſtrait: A guilty conſcience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, that the accompliſhment of the promiſes doth occaſion much ſpiritual joy and rejoicing to his own. We told you the giving of the promiſes occaſioneth joy; and when the promiſe travelleth in birth, and bringeth forth, that occaſioneth much more ſpiritual joy: this is clear from *Pſal.* 28. 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſhield, my heart truſted in him, and I was helped.* And he draweth this excellent concluſion from it, *Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my ſoul will I praiſe him.* And we conceive, that ſometimes God tryſteth the accompliſhment of the promiſes, with ſome precious manifeſtation of himſelf to the ſoul, which maketh them to *rejoice with*

with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory; but however, that is the matter of a ſpiritual ſong, *That mercie and truth have met together, and righteouſneſſe and peace are kiſſing one another*, Is it not a pleaſant matter of a ſong to behold *love* making promiſes, & to behold *faithfulneſs* accompliſhing them?

And the laſt advantage is, That the obſervation of the accompliſhment of promiſes, doth ſtrengthen a Chriſtians faith in his intereſt with God; ſo that now many diſputings are ſilenced, and many queſtions now are out of the way: this is clear from *Pſal.* 31. 21, 22. *David* confeſſeth his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord had *ſhewed his marvellous loving kindneſſe in a ſtrong City*, then all his quarrel was againſt himſelf, becauſe he had *quarrelled*, and did ſay *in his haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

And now we ſhall only ſpeak a little unto ſome duties that we would preſſe upon you, from that which we have ſpoken. And the firſt duty is, that Chriſtians would be much in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, and ſtanding upon their watch tower untill the *viſion ſhall ſpeak*; And we ſhall only give you theſe things to enforce it, 1. It is his command that ye ſhould ſo do: this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe, where *David* preſſeth that duty much, *Waite on the Lord*, ſaith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in the ſame verſe, *Wait I ſay, on the Lord*: and no doubt the doubling of it ſpeaketh not only the advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, & the great neceſſity that we have

to

to go about it: and that ſame word it is repeated by *David*, Pſal. 31. 24. *Be of good courage*, which is that ſame, to wait upon the Lord. 2. Theſe that wait patiently for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, God wil ſtrengthen them to wait; this is clear from *Pſ.*26. at the cloſe, *Wait on the Lord*, & when we are *Hagar*-like caſting away the childe of hope; he vvill open our eyes, and give us refreſhment, by which we may be ſupported under our diſquietment, *and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart.* And there is this, 3. There ſhal be a ſpeedy accompliſhment of the promiſes: it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promiſed, and thou haſt believed, ſhall be told down to you, as it were in one ſum, *principal* and *intereſt*: as is clear from *Hab.* 2. 3. where he poſitively aſſerteth, *That the viſion will come, and will not tarry.* There is indeed a pleaſant ſeeming contradiction in that verſe, he had ſaid before, *that the viſion would tarry*, and yet here he ſaith, *the viſion will not tarry, but will ſurely come*: in which ye may ſee the divinity both of *ſenſe* and *faith*, and that noble contradiction that is between their aſſertions. *Senſe* aſſerting that the promiſe doth tarry too long, and *Faith* crying out, it will ſurely come, it will not tarry, that is alwayes faiths declaration vvhich is ſet dovvn in 2 *Pet.*3.9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe.* 4. Promiſes that come unto us through the moſt ſtrong and lively exerciſe of faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are moſt reliſhing and ſweet, and theſe mercies come unto

us with a binding tye of love: this is ſomewhat pointed at in *Iſai.* 25. 9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his Salvation*: their waiting and expecting of the promiſe to be accompliſhed in its time is there the fountain of their ſong and of their ſpiritual joy. I think ſometimes a Chriſtian is like that misbelieving Lord, 2 *King.* 7. 2. that though they meet with the accompliſhment of a promiſe, yet they do not taſte of the ſweetneſſe that is in it, becauſe they did not believe the Word of the Lord.

The ſecond duty that we would preſſe from what we have ſpoken, is, That Chriſtians would cloſe with the promiſes for their everlaſting inheritance, ſince the promiſes of the Covenant are *exceeding great*, and *exceeding precious*, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unſpeakable. O ſhould not theſe things proclaim aloud unto us, *Cloſe with the promiſes as your portion for ever.* I think, one that hath a right to the promiſes, and hath entered himſelf heir unto that vaſt inheritance, he may ſometimes rejoice in that threefold myſtery of the Goſpel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other then a contradiction. 1. He may ſay ſometimes, *I have nothing*, and yet *I poſſeſſe all things*, for when he looketh unto his being in the world, he is poor as *Lazarus*, having no place whereon to lay his head; but when he caſteth his eye unto his ſpiritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his treaſures, and is conſtrained to cry out, *I poſſeſſe all things.* 2. Sometimes he may

may cry forth, *I am rich*, and yet I am *exceeding poor*; he may be rich in hopes, and yet poor in his poſſeſſions. There is much of a Chriſtians treaſure that lyeth in hope; hope is that thing that will make the Chriſtian ſweetly quite all other in compariſon of that: That is the motto of the Chriſtian, *ſpero meliora*, which he holdeth up in his flag, even in the greateſt ſtorm, and at length he findeth it true, that hope *maketh not aſhamed*. 3. Sometimes the Chriſtian will cry forth, *I am alwayes ſorrowing*, and yet *alwayes rejoicing*: when he caſteth his eye unto himſelf, he will ſit down and water his couch with tears, but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jeſus Chriſt, *He will rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*: a Chriſtian can both weep and rejoice at one time, and again he can rejoice and weep: No doubt, the reflecting upon the immenſe hope, and that everlaſting Crown, will make a Chriſtian rejoice under all his diſquietments and anxieties in the world, he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious inheritance. A Chriſtian hath the eye of an Eagle that can behold and diſcern things a far off.

The third duty that we would preſſe upon you, is, To long for the day when all the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace ſhal receive their compleat accompliſhment, and when ye ſhall be entered into the everlaſting fruition of all theſe things wherein your bleſſedneſſe lyeth. There is a threefold *come* that Chriſt ſpeaketh of to the ſoul that is united unto him, all which they ſweetly obey.

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There is that first *come*, which is in *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy loaden*: And there is that second *come*, *Isai.* 26. *Come my people, and enter into the chambers*, which is, to entertain that excellent correspondency with him in troublesome times. And there is a third matchlesse *come*, when Christ shall say to his own in the day of their standing before the Tribunall, *Come, O blessed of my Father*: Shall we say it that if we had *Faith as a grain of mustard seed*, wee would cry forth, *Why is his chariot so long in coming?* and did we relish, or made a high account of the matchlesse promises of the boundlesse Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ships of desire.* I shall say no more but this, Christ *is gone up with a shout* unto heaven, and shall come again with the *sound of a Trumpet*, *sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our God, sing praises.*

The last thing that we would presse upon you, is, that ye would mark the time of the accomplishment of the promises. And as to this, I shall say but these: 1. That ordinarily the time of the accomplishment of the promises, is the time when sense, reason, and probability, doth most contradict them: this is clear, *Ezek.* 37. in the fulfilling of the promises, that were past to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were *as a valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. vers. of that chap. compared with the 12. And 2. that the time of the accomplishment of the promises, ordinarily is

is a praying time: this is alſo clear from *Daniel* 9. 2, 3. and from *Jer.* 29. 12. compared with the 11. verſe and the 10. Thus ſaith the Lord, the time when he will viſite them, and perform his good word to them, in cauſing them to return, it ſhall be a time when they ſhall *call upon me, and ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them.* And 3. the time of the accompliſhment of his promiſes, it is a time when our thoughts of the promiſes are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies; this is a ſign that our mercy is near, and it is bringing forth: However, it is our duty to wait on him who can give a being unto his Word, and ſweetly perform his promiſes. We ought not to limite infinite wiſdome, nor to ſay unto him that is infinite in ſtrength, *How can ſuch a thing be?* but anſwer all objections of misbelief with this, God hath ſpoken it, and he will alſo do it, and drown all our objections of misbelief in that glorious and myſterious Name of His, *I am that I am.* To him be praiſe.

SERMON VI.

Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſſe to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance amongſt them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me.*

WHen firſt we did begin our diſcourſe upon the precious and excellent

grace

grace of fath; We told you that we intended to speak of it under a twofold notion and consideration. First, As it layeth hold upon Christ for Justification; and of this we have spoken to you at some length, as ye have heard. Secondly, As it closeth with Christ for Sanctification; and of this we are to speak at this time: and have chosen these words to speak of it; which are a part of that excellent Oration and discourse that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence: In which Oration and Discourse of his, ye may behold these four things eminently shining; 1. That Godlinesse and good manners are not inconsistent, nor contrary one to another: Therefore ye will see in the second and third verses of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a Courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being seven dayes in the School of Christ, then by being seven years in all the courts of *France*. This secondly, That innocent Policy that he made use of in the deliverance of this Oration, which likewise doth appear in the second and third verse of this chapter, where he endeavours to insinuate and ingratiat himself in the favours of the person before whom he had stood; I confesse, piety is the best policy, and it is the best policy that is taken up in intertaining piety, howbeit true policy may move in one orb and sphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in some case. 3. This shineth in that discourse, even the spiritual boldnesse *Paul* had in gi[illegible]ng an excellent confession of his faith, and

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the declaring him to be God, even Jesus Christ in whom he did believe: Christ *witnessed a glorious confession before Pontius Pilate* for him, and he would witness a glorious *confession* before *Agrippa* for Christ; that since Christ had not denyed him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Christ in this day: and this is from the beginning, and all alongs. Lastly, this shineth in the words that *Paul* doth set forth, the matchlesse freedome and unspeakable riches of Christ, not only toward himself, in that he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him; but likewise toward the *Gentiles*, to whom he was sent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriously condescend to visite the dark places of the earth, and to have the *morning star*, and the *day spring from on high*, arising on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verse which we have read, you may behold these five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel; for attaining of which, Ministers are made instruments under God. The first is, to open the eyes of the blind, which in short is even this, to give those that are ignorant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep mysteries of the Father, and of the Son: So that from this ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects above the power of nature. The second we may see in these words, *to remove them from darknes to light*; which importeth these two: The removing of persons from an estate of misery, unto an estate of excellent joy. 3. The removing of persons from an estate

of iniquity, unto an estate of holiness; *darkness* in Scripture pointing out sin, and *light* in Scripture pointing out holiness. 3. The bringing us *from under the power of Satan unto God*, the making a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage; that those who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love; that those who were under the bondage of sin, may be under the sweet obedience of Christ, *whose yoke is easie, and whose burden is light. Matth.* 11. 30. 4. That persons may receive the *remission of sins, and the forgiveness of their iniquity.* This is the great voice of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come to a glorified Christ: Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other; and these are the great motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sins, *and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*; that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdom that Christ hath purchased, and gone before to prepare. And withall, in this verse, as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly method that the Gospel keepeth in conquering souls; and you may see these excellent allurements, these perswasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were: Christ cometh not unto us cloathed with the robes of Majesty; but cloathed with the robes of Love and advantage, knowing that in this

this posture he shal most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching of the Gospel, we shal only according to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it (not intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel) but as it is a property of Faith: and it is that, *Faith in Jesus Christ hath a noble and excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness, they are sanctified, saith he, through faith in me.* We shal not stand long to clear this unto us, it is evident from *Acts* 15. 9. where the Apostle telleth us of *purifying their hearts by faith:* And likewise, 1. *Tim.* 1. 5. where a pure heart and faith unfeigned, they are joined and linked together: As likewise, 1. *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, he purifieth himself.* All the graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and unseparable chain, so that he that obtaineth one, he shal obtain all; yea more, all the graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, so that we may cõpare them unto *Hypocrates* twins, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together, & they did grow together: even so when one grace doth rejoice, the rest doth rejoice with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth also mourn with it; and when once grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shal insist a little upon. First, we shal show you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctificatiõ, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. Is that it discovereth to the soul that matchless excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing comliness that is in Christ, which sight doth exceedingly perswade the soul to draw that conclusion, *What have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him, maketh us lose our acquaintance with our idols; and when once we are united unto Christ by faith, we break that union that we had with them. And indeed, the want of the knowledge of that excellent comliness that is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great occasion that the poorest deities and idols in the world taketh up your hearts: Did ye but once see him who is that *glorious sun of righteousness*, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen*, unto that excellent confession of faith *Eccles.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of spirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotless holiness of Christ. Faith doth not only discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holiness, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing *sanctification.* It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin and misery, that we desired to be as Gods, knowing good and evil; but certainly it is amongst the first steps to life and happiness, when the soul desireth to be holy as he is holy: And I suppose, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavoring a blessed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the blessed Image of Christ, ye know not the beauty of holiness.

3. Faith

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and draweth strength and vertue from him, for conquering of our lusts, & in raising us up into a blessed conformity unto himself. When the Christian is weak, faith is that noble correspondent between the emptiness that is in us, and the fulness that is in Christ. Faith is that noble correspondent between that weakness that is in us, and that everlasting strength that is in him: Therefore there are two noble and excellent counsels of faith. First, it counsels us not to lean to our own strength. And secondly, to have our recourse unto him whose Name is *Jehovah*, that *everlasting strength*. And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Christ by faith, that prophesie should be accomplished: *I will make the feeble ones as David, and David as the Angel of God.* And when a Christian is most diffident in himself, then God should prove himself to be Almighty, and All-sufficient.

And 4. faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promises, and doth believe them: and believing of the promises, bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*; according to that word upon which we were speaking, 2. *Peter* 1.4. by believing the promises (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith also believeth the threatnings that are past in Scripture against sin, & the believing them hath an undoubted and strong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification. Faith strengtheneth a Christian against the cõmitting of

iniquity with these two words: that word, *Rom.* 6. 20. *O soul*, saith faith, commit not iniquity, for *the wages of sin is death*: and that word, *Rev.* 21. last, *There shal in no way enter into that City, any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity*. And be perswaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord not easily broken, to restrain you from the acting of iniquity. And I shal tell you briefly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours doth commit iniquity with so little fear, and with so much delight; it is even this, because we believe not the threatnings of God, which shal be accomplished in their own season: for is it possible, that if ye believed that word, *Rev.* 21. last, *That nothing shal enter into the New Jerusalem, that defileth or worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie*, that ye durst for a world adventure upon the committing of iniquity as ye do? And I shal only say to such that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming when they shal be constrained to cry out, *He hath spoken it, and he hath done it: and faithful is he:* There is not one jot, nor one title in the Word of the Lord, that shal fall to the ground. And believe it, God will be faithful in the accomplishment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the noble excellencies, and those spiritual dignities that are in that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints in light. Faith (as it were) carrieth up the soul to the top of *Pisgah*, of which it is admitted

to

to behold the *promiſed land*: and truely the ſeeing of theſe noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them ſtudy holineſs, ſince they know that there is an impoſſibility for one to attain to that eſtate without holineſs, becauſe he hath ſaid it: *Without holineſs no man ſhal ſee God.* O then, if once ye ſaw heaven, ye would be conſtrained to walk in the path of Sanctification, ſince it is the glorious way by which ye muſt walk in thorow the gates of that bleſſed City. But ye know not the excellency that is there; it is a fancy and notion unto you, and that is the ground that ye do not ſtudy to conform your ſelves unto the bleſſed Image of God. And I would only ask you this one queſtion, Is it poſſible that ſuch a deluſion as this can overtake you, as to think, that ye who never ſtudied holineſs on earth, ſhal yet enter into heavens gates. I know there are ſome that ſay in their heart, *I ſhal have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart*: and many more, that ſuppoſe that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the eſtate of nature, and be compleat in the eſtate of grace all in one day. But why will ye deceive your ſelves? *Can a Nation be born in one day?* Or is there but one ſtep between hell and heaven? O remember! though nothing be impoſſible with God, yet there was but one thief ſaved on the croſs.

7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holineſs, in this reſpect, that it believeth the great advantages that are promiſed unto the perſon that ſtudieth holineſs. Faith believeth that word, *Matth.*

5. 8. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of his excellent sayings, and maketh the Christian endeavor to attain unto a likeness and conformity with him, that so he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith discovereth unto Christians the sinfulness of sin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exercise of the grace of faith. And I will give you these three grounds, why faith compleatly discovereth the sinfulness of sin. 1. Faith letteth us see the person against whom we commit this sin, and that doth exceedingly aggrege sin: for when the Christian is admitted to behold God, and to see that matchless excellency that is in him; then (saith he) what a beast was I to offend such a glorious Majesty as he? What a fool was I to kick against the pricks, or to enter in the lists with such an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Christian see these excellent obligations of love that Christ hath imposed upon us. Faith letteth us see the ancient and everlasting love of Christ. Faith is that grace that letteth us see his sufferings. Faith letteth us see all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Christian cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwise.* And no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the study of this duty, he would be less in contracting debt, and were ye but seriously taken up in the study of these two great Registers. 1. That Register in which all the infinit acts of love are recorded. And 2. that Register in which all your acts of offending precious

Christ

Christ are written; ye would be astonished and ashamed to see so much forgiven you, and durst not sin any more: There ye would see infinite mercy desiring to *rejoice over judgement*; and there ye would see the spotless riches of that transcendent grace that is in Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it: and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second that we shal speak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining Sanctification, shal be to enquire a little into these things that hinder even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith; for some Christians there are that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith, making use of Christ for Sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by Faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols, at least to their apprehensions, neither yet raise them up to a conformity with God; so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shal once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*: and when they fight and doth not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope.*

The first ground of such a dispensation is, that a Christian is not constant in his actings of Faith; he will be strong in Faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faint in that exercise, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith: For when Faith hath gotten its advantages, they loose them through security and negligence: that is a command that should continually

be obeyed, *Truſt in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Chriſtian were more taken up in the conſtant actings of Faith, he ſhould ſometimes ſing that ſong, *I truſted in God, and I was helped.*

Secondly, the moſt part of Chriſtians, they are not ſtrong and vigorous in actings of their Faith; their Faith is exceedingly weak, and ſo they cannot bring forth theſe noble fruits and effects of Faith: if we were accompliſhing the work of Faith with power, and if we were truſting in God with all our hearts, then that promiſe in *Pſal.* 37. 5. ſhould be accompliſhed to us: *Truſt in the Lord, and he ſhal bring it to paſs.* Thirdly, there is a ſtrong heart-conjunction and ſoul-union between us and our idols: we are joined to our idols, and therefore we cannot be eaſily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war againſt them, there is a procurator within that cryeth, *O ſpare this little one*, or this *profitable* or *pleaſant one*: and this is ordinarily our practiſe, to ſpare the choiſeſt of our luſts, ſo that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt.* But I confeſs, if that union were once diſſolved, we ſhould then be heard with greater earneſtneſs to cry forth, *O bleſſed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, ſometimes a Chriſtian layeth too much weight upon the acting of Faith, & doth not imploy faith, but as an inſtrument to which Chriſt muſt beſtow ſtrength to conquer. Sometimes we think that Faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand: but remember, Faith is but an empty thing without Chriſt; as ye may ſee, *Acts* 15. 9. where the

the *purifying their hearts by faith*, is aſcribed to the holy Ghoſt: ſo that the activity of Faith is from him, and not in it ſelf. Fifthly, a Chriſtian doth not hate ſin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his luſts, and with theſe ſtrong idols that are within him; but there is a ſecret heart-inclination to that very idol which he doth oppoſe: ſo that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Chriſtian; ſometimes his light will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol, and yet his idol will cry; O ſpare ſuch an idol: yea more, ſometimes his heart will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol, and yet his heart will cry, O ſpare ſuch an idol; that is to ſay, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of ſin, *Rom.* 12. 9. *Abhor that which is evil.* The word in the Original, hate evil as ye would do hell; that is, have perfect hatred to ſin. O to hate iniquity as much as hell, & join that word; Eph. 5. 11. *Reprove the unfruitful works of darkneſs*; or as the word may be rendered, *Make out by unanſwerable arguments* to your tentations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitful works of darkneſs: *convince* your tentation that you cannot do it: as we ſuppoſe, it was noble arguing of *Joſeph* when he was tempted, *How ſhal I do this?* he put the tentation (as it were) to it: O tentation! give me one ground why I ſhould cõmit ſuch an iniquity? And certainly, if we were thus reaſoning with our tentations, they would flee before us: But the truth is, we imbrace the deſire of our tentation

upon

upon implicite faith. It is a sad regrate, and yet I may utter it; O if men would but deal with God as they do by Satan; we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these allurements he setteth forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God in every thing. Sixthly, a christian promoveth not in the growth of Sanctification; though in some measure exercising faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being cloathed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draughts of the Image of Christ engraven upon our hearts, we would have more victory over our lusts. There is a command *for a perfect love* to that which is good, and holiness in that same place, *Rome* 12. 9. and *cleave*, saith he, *to that which is good*; or as the word may be rendered, *Be married and glewed to that which is good*: let there be an unseparable and indissolvable knot of union between you and that which is good. And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavor more to be cloathed with it: but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity to be made like God. O will ye think on it, what a thing is it for you who are the dust of his feet, to be made conform to him! Seventhly, a Christian is not much in the exercise of other duties that should go along with Faith, suspect that Faith for presumption, that can act and be maintained without Prayer; certainly prayer is keepeth in the life of

Faith

Faith: Prayer, it is that grace that must act mutually with Faith, in accomplishing that blessed work of Sanctification: and if we prayed more, and believed more, then we should have more to speak concerning the victory over our lusts. When was it, O Christian and expectant of heaven! that ye was constrained to put up an *Ebenezer*, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me?* When was it, O Christian and expectant of heaven! that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath arisen, and mine enemies are scattered before my face?* I will tell you what is your practice, ye make such a covenant with your idols, as *Nahash* did with the men of *Jabes Gilead*, 1. *Sam.* 11. 2. 3. your lusts desire to make you pluck out your right eyes, and there is nothing your lusts will command you, but almost ye will obey: but would you send out prayer as a messenger to tell the King of such tyranny, ye should know better what it is to be victorious. There is such a covenant between the graces of the spirit, especially between Faith and Prayer (if so we may allude) as was made between *Joab* and *Abishai*, 2. *Sam.* 10. 11. one grace as it were, saith to another, if I be weak, *come over and help me*, and if ye be weak, *I will come and help you.* When one grace is like to fall in battel, then another grace cometh and helpeth it: when Faith is like to die, then *Prayer and Experience* cometh in, and sweetly helpeth Faith: when Love is beginning to die, and wax cold in the fight, then Faith cometh in and putteth life in Love: and when Patience is like to fall, and be overcome, then Faith comes in and

speaks

speaks that word to Patience; *Wait on God, for I shal yet praise him for the health of his countenāce.* Oftentimes our Patience and our sense they join together; for when *sense* speaketh good things, Patience is in life; but when once sense preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and Faith must then maintain and uphold it.

The third thing that we shal speak as to Faiths influence upon Sanctification, shal be to draw these four conclusions from the point.

The first is, that ye may know from this, the rise and original of your litle succes over corruption. There are many that are troubled with this question; O! what is the ground that I get not victory over my lusts? And they propose that question to Christ, that once the Disciples propoled to him? *Why was it that I could not cast out such a devil?* And I can give no other answer nor Christ gave to them; it is, because ye have not faith; *for if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed*, ye might say unto your idols, depart from us, and they should obey you, and there should not be a mountain in the way between you and heaven; but if ye had Faith, it should be rouled away, & become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, that they are not much in the exercise of faith; sometimes ye enter in the lists with your lusts in your own strength, then ye are carried captives; and if ye do enter in the lists having some Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one stroak.

I will tell you six things, which if Faith overcome

come, it keepeth the field, and maketh the Christian sing a song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome that idol of Impatience and Discontent: some never meet with a discouragement, but they cry out, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* They are soon put to the end of their patience. Now Faith can overcome such an idol, and I will tell you three excellent things that Faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. Faith telleth the Christian, *there is an end*, and their *expectation shal not be cut off.* Faith telleth that there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement: When they are broght to the midnight of trouble, Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, & how near the approaching of the morning, when day shal break, and all their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have: if ye loss your son, or your choisest contentment in the world, Faith will say to you such a word as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, 1. *Sam.* 1. 8. *Is not Christ better to thee then ten sons?* The choisest contentments ye can loose, (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them: and so this maketh the soul be ashamed of their impatiency, and to give over their freting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see, that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath

hath these two excellent ends, it hath our *advantage* as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end; and there is not a dispensation that a christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark dispensation, let faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations; for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not chastening me in love, but punishing me with the wound of an enemy, but faith will propheſie good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that Faith will bring low, is that idol of covetousnesse and desire to the things of the world. I think that word, *Eccl.* 3.11. was never so much accomplished as it is in those days and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*, that is the idol that dwelleth and lodgeth within you, yea, the world it hath your first thoghts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night; yea more, it hath your thoughts when ye are at Prayer, and when ye are at Preaching; yea, it hath such a dominion over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new Bible, and in all the Ten Commands scrapeth out the Name of God, and setteth down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, the world saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me, &c.* But faith will bring this idol low, and soon let you see the vanity and emptinesse of it; yea, faith would let you see a more noble object, and withal, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to

spend

ſpend in following after lies: And I am perſwaded of this, that if ye could win to ſhake hands with cold death every day, & ſay, thou at laſt ſhal be my prince, & ſhal be the King to whom I ſhal be a ſubject, & if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie theſe purſuits after the world: and I ſhal ſay, he is a bleſſed Chriſtian that can maintain alwayes ſuch thoughts of the world, as he ſhall have when he is ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time and Eternity. I ſhall ſay it, and believe it, O worldling! and O thou that haſt the Moon upon thy head, & in thy heart, the day ſhall once come, that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the world, as thoſe that undervalued it never ſo much.

The third great idol that Faith will bring low, is, that idol of *ſelf-love*, and *ſelf-indulgence*, that which is the great mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be ſaid againſt that idol of ſelf-love & ſelf-indulgence, that which is in 2 *Tim.* 3.2. were ſufficient, that amongſt all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the firſt place, *they ſhall be lovers of themſelves*: we cannot take pains for Chriſt, we cannot go about the exerciſe of any duty, becauſe that idol of ſelf-indulgence forbideth us. I will tell you its counſel and great advice it giveth you, *O perſon, pity thy ſelf*, that ſame counſel *Peter* gave his Maſter, it biddeth you *pity your ſelf*: But if we could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *deſtroy your ſelf*, for *ſelf-indulgence* and *ſelf-love*, is that which will ruine you. O what bleſſed attainments of God, what bleſſed fruitions

of

of Jesus Christ? what advancement in mortification? what conformity to God hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and only not utterly ruined, even in the best? I think, if once ye could set your foot upon that idol, the rest should fall apace; that is the General of all the forces of your lusts; and it is as *Saul*, the head higher then the rest of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that Faith will subdue, is self-righteousness: this is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteousness, & submit to the righteousness of Christ: And the great ground of it is, that there is this principle within us all, we love to go to heaven thorow a covenant of works, and we never desire to be much obliged to any other: we cannot submit our selves to the righteousness of Christ.

The fifth great idol that faith can subdue, is that of *pleasure*, the world, and the contentments of it. *Pleasure* is the great idol that many worship and adore: there are some that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleasures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low of such an idol; for Faith discovereth to a soul more excellent pleasures, more sweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun. Faith maketh a Christian lose his taste unto all things that are here below. Faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold these passing vanities, those transcient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is this, that as Faith helpeth

helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages Faith hath by the growth and exercise of Sanctification. 1. It is a noble evidence of Faith, and maketh a Christiã to be perswaded that he is setled upon the Rock, & that his interest in God is made sure. Sanctification is that which wil help a Christian dayly to read his interest in God: this is clear from *Jam.* 2. 18 *I will shew thee my faith by my works:* where this is clearly holden forth, that a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, he can upon all times give an extract of his faith, and, as it were, discover it, and show it to the world. 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *Jam* 2. 22. *And by works was faith made perfect.* There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to Faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification; for not only is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth such a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a believer, but it also receiveth strength and power. Faith is not of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth; but on the contrary, if Faith bring forth an hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day it groweth stronger: & this is further clear, 2. *Pet.* 1. 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, ye shal neither be barren nor unfruitful.* And from that other word, *Jam.* 2. where is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone.* If faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life & vigor; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification,

ye

ye would, no doubt, attain to a noble & lively acting of that grace of faith. And lastly, if a christian be much in this work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of faith; Sometimes faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting, but faith and a pure conscience joyned together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thirdly, we may draw this conclusion, If faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, & helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and *their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web.* There are some that have faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall not that faith unquestionably *perish as a dream, and evanish as the vision of the night*? and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, then study more the work of Sanctification. I shall but from *Job* 8.14, 15. give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self. 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an act of foolishnesse under heaven, as a hypocrites hope; because it is but a castle in the aire, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand, so that word ye have rendered, whose *hope shall be cut off*, is in the Original, *whose folly shall be cut off*; shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must be most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for shall at last loath them:

them: O hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Christ; but be perſwaded of it, Chriſt ſhal eternally loath you, and ye ſhal eternally loath Chriſt: that is clear in that ſame word, *Whoſe hope ſhal be cut off*: or as the word may be read, *Whoſe hope ſhal loath them*; the thing he hoped for ſhal loath him, and Chriſt ſhal ſay, *Depart, I know you not.* 3. And though ye have now much delight and pleaſure in the actings of your preſumptuous hope, yet at the laſt, ye ſhal loath that hope. The word will carry that not only the things ye hoped for ſhal loath you, but ye likewiſe ſhal loath your hope. The day is coming that ye ſhal cry forth, curſed be the day that ever I believed that I ſhould get heaven. 3. It ſhal at laſt be the matter of his vexation, from that word, *whoſe hope ſhal be cut off*, or as the word may be rendered, *whoſe hope ſhal vexe him.* O when the hypocrites ſhal meet with that anxious, that dreadful diſappointment one day, they ſhal then put their hand on their head, being aſhamed becauſe of their confidence. 4. He ſtudieth by all means to keep his hope, though it but falſe; therefore have ye that word in the 15. *verſ. he holdeth it faſt*; or as the word is, he *keepeth it with hand and arm, with all his ſtrength* he keepeth his hope: ſo that if Chriſt would come from heaven, and ſay: Man, thou art an hypocrite, and thy *hope ſhal be cut off*: they would ſay, I wil keep my hope, *Sir*, & maintain it, & that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation. I love never a Faith that in this ſide of time is unchangeable, and never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built

alwayes

alwayes upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word; *He shal lean upon his house*: which we suppose may be interpret thus, he shal lean upon his *worldly enjoyments*, or upon these spiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of an hypocrite is never buil: upon Christ, and so unquestionably that hope shal be cut off and evanisht. 6. Let hypocrites hold fast their hope with both their armes. I will say these three words to them. First, if all the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you shal be separate: as it is in that word, *Your hope shal depart from you*, and ye shal quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to *death*, and no further: according to that word, *Job* 18. 14. *Whose hope shal bring him to the King of terrors*. Will it bring me no further? say you. O no, *The King of terrors shal separate you and your hope*. Thirdly, the day is coming when the foundation of it shal be discovered, and there shal not be a delusion but it shal be unfolded. The day is approaching when Christ shal ask, how you got your faith? and how you maintained it? 7. The hypocrites hope is a poor building, it is as a *spiders web*: which I conceive (without being critick) is this: The hope of hypocrites they spin out of their own bowels, they have it not from Christ; but as ye see a spider spin out of its own bowels; so do they out of themselves: it is no better stuff then their own rotten righteousnes: Christ never begat those unto a lively hope. Let me beseech you therefore, that by al means ye would study to make sure

ſure your intereſt in God, and to build your faith on him, whoſe name is that *munition of rocks*: for believe it, I may ſay it with much perſwaſion, I know there are many that ſhal once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful diſappointment: and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending thoſe that preſumtuouſly take hold of a hope, before Chriſt take hold of them, ſtudy to ſearch your hope what it is. I deſire not to raze any foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Chriſt; but would deſire and charge you to raze the foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and ye knew it not*. I would preſs theſe three things upon you. First, O ye that are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and that know not what it is to embrace the offers of the everlaſting Goſpel, obey that excellent counſel, 2. *Chron.* 30. 8. *Give Chriſt your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yeeld your ſelf to the Lord*, it is in the Original *Give your hand to God*; which is in ſhort *marry him* and be content to *contract* your ſelf to him: for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you & Chriſt ſhal be eternally confirmed, or that contract between the devil and you ſhal be eternally ratified. And, I ſuppoſe, there is ſo much ſpoken to the commendation of that Noble Plant of renown, that ye may take Chriſt (if ſo we may ſpeak) blindly, ye may cloſe your eyes and take him, for he ſhal never diſappoint your hope; for let you think of him to eternity, he ſhal alwayes be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earneſtly deſire you

you once to search and try, what was the first rise of your faith in Jesus Christ: I am perswaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their foot, they never travelled in pain, and yet faith is brought forth: Is not this a mystery? Shal it be said, *Before they travelled, they brought forth?* I do not question but there may be less and greater pangs of the new birth; but this is most certain, there is alwayes some either lesser troubles or greater, till that child be brought forth: and yet I may condemne these that *stay too long in the place of the breaking forth of children:* Christ will never refuse you when ye do really come, because you have not been so many years and dayes in prison to the Law. Thirdly, let me desire you to go and ask, is there a grave between you and heaven, in all that way thorow which the Saints have travelled, upon which this is written, here lyeth a man that sincerely sought life from Christ, and he denyed him? I think without encroaching too much upon searching forth of the exercise of the Saints in heaven, I think we may suppose, there may be in heaven some *Queries* and interrogations: Christ shal ask, O beloved, Did ye want any thing here below, when ye was sent forth to travel in the world? And ye shal be constrained to answer; *No.* Christ shal ask that question at you: Did I not all things well? And ye shal be constrained to answer; *Yes.* Christ shal propose that question: Are ye not well rewarded for all your pains? And you shal be constrained to answer; *Yes.* O, but to take him, he is the blessed and most

moſt excellent One in heaven and in earth: it is the beſt bargain ever ye made. O ye merchands, that have made many excellent bargains to your own apprehenſion, will ye come and make one excellent bargain yet, that will make you eternally up. And what is that? Come and buy Chriſt, and take him for nothing: this is not your ordinary bargaining: there is few comes to you, and biddeth you buy excellent things *without money*; but come in the Goſpel, and ye ſhal get Chriſt *without money*. O niggards, that are loath to ſpend your money in the world, will ye come to Chriſt, and believe on him, take him freely. O ſay ye; if I could get three things of Chriſt, I would come. 1. I would have much gold and ſilver. I ſay, come to Chriſt, and ye ſhal get much gold and ſilver. Is that true? It is abundantly true: ſee *Job* 22. 25. 26. where preſſing that exhortation, *Acquaint thy ſelf with God*, and uſing many arguments he ſaith, *Thou ſhalt lay up gold as duſt, and the gold of Ophir as the ſtones of the brooks*. Is not that gold enough? yea, ye ſhal have ſilver likewiſe, *Thou ſhalt have plenty of ſilver*. In the 26. *verſe*, ye ſhal not only have gold and ſilver, but ſhal have plenty of it; and ſhal have the moſt excellent and refined gold. But, O, ſay ye, will that promiſe be literally accompliſhed to me, if I come to Chriſt? I would only ſay theſe three things to thee 1. Come to Chriſt, and if gold and ſilver be for thine advantage, thou ſhalt have it literally accompliſhed. 2. I ſay, ye ſhal have as much contentment in Jeſus Chriſt, as if ye had this houſe full of gold.

3. I will say this to thee, Christ shal be thy gold and thy silver; according to that word in the 26. *verse*, which is most remarkable; yea, *the Almighty shal be thy defence*; or as it is in the Original, shal be *thy gold*, speaking of the promise of gold before. Secondly, ye say, I would have this, that what I purpose might be accomplished. I say, come to Christ, and ye shal have that likewise, *Job* 22. 28. *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shal be established unto thee*; which, I conceive, doth not only take in these spiritual decrees, but likewise these that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have, say ye, and I would come to Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of my heart. I say, O man, and O woman, come to Christ, and thou shalt have what thou desireth: this is clear from *Psal.* 37. 4. *Delight thy self in God, and he shal give thee the desires of thine heart.* What can ye have, man, but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Christ? he putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to *Solomon Ask*; what would ye have? and I shal give you. Christ, as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and he desireth you to ask what you would have: And is not this an excellent bargan? O nigard, what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded, that ye that refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in heaven will return upon thy head; the eternal curse of all the expectants of heaven, and heirs of life, will return upon the head of that person that will not take Christ.

And

And curſed curſed ſhal that perſon be who will not take Chriſt, and one day all the Congregation in heaven and earth ſhal ſay, Amen.

SERMON VII.

2. Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own ſelves: know you not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

ASſurance is a precious gift, which many that live in theſe dayes do undervalue, and tread under foot: Do not the Chriſtians of theſe times go halting between two opinions, being neither poſitive that they are received *into the adoption of children*, nor poſitive that they are yet in a ſtate of alienation, *and enemies in their minds by wicked works*; yea, and (that which is worſe) there are many amongſt us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they purſue more to ſatisfie their ſenſe for the preſent, nor to have a ſolide well grounded aſſurance for time to come. I could wiſh that all the debats and queſtions of theſe dayes, that take up ſo much of our time, and ſo much of our ſpirits for better things, were happily drowned in theſe four excellent queſtions, which without controverſie, are of greateſt concernment for all to have reſolved. 1. Where ſhal I reſt at night when the long ſhaddows of the everlaſting evening ſhal be ſtretched out upon me? And whether

or no hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2. It is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what shal I do to inherit everlasting life?* to be asking at him that can sweetly resolve you. And 3. not to rest there, but to be crying forth in the morning, *What shal I do to be saved?* And to be crying out in the evening, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It is sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth.* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the revolutions of States and Kingdoms: But I suppose, it were better to ask what news from heaven concerning thy self? and what news from within, and news of thy bridegrooms coming? For these are great Courts, I mean the Court of heaven, and the Court of conscience; the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavor much to know. 5. It is a soul-concerning question, that a Christian should be much in proposing to himself, *What shal I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* It is certain we must say, that our Faith and assurance, and all our other mercies are from him; and yet, alace! we are negligent in his praises: we may with *Tamar*, rent our garments of diverse colours, even the *garments of the Kings daughters*, because of spiritual whoredom against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length of that precious and fundamental grace of Faith, we have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon these words we now have read, concer-

concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith. The Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his Ministery and Apostleship, from the contempt that was cast upon it: he proveth he was a Minister of the New Testament, called and sent of God, by the blessing and success he had amongst them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in vain; and they being so much in censuring his way, and seeking an account of his Ministery. In these words, he doth (as it were) draw them off by a holy diversion unto another business, as if he had said to them: O *Corinthians*, I will divert you from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable: be much in judging and examining your selves: and indeed, it is a truth worth our observation, that if we were more in judging of our selves, we would be less in judging others: but, alace! there are some of us, we are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable. First, that there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance that he is in the Faith, and hath an interest in Christ. *By being in the Faith*, here is not to be understood, a being in the doctrine of Faith only; but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed, and really united to Christ by Faith. Secondly, that the seeking after assurance, is a necessary commanded duty; for ye see here the words very imperative, *Examine your selves, try your selves.* Thirdly, that there are many mistakes and delusions amongst people, concerning

that noble and excellent thing, *assurance*, there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shal once discountenance, and sweep away, like a *spiders web*; and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*; or as the word may be rendered, *Take an accurate and experimental search* of your selves, *try your selves*, or *prove your selves*. It is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smiths, finding and trying of gold. And so his putting off the *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing; many do pals a decreet in their own favors, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, take notice of this from the words, that there is much, and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the Faith or no; this is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, that one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the Faith or no, is self-examination, and putting our self to the tryal: As if he had laid, Would you have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, we intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable*, I shal only propose these reasons unto you, to make it evident. 1. It is known in Scripture, that the saints of old have in an ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, 2. *Song v.* 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*: and *Rom.* 8. 38. *I am perswaded*, saith the Apostle, *that neither death*

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nor life, &c. shal be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ. And 2.*Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to show how Christians may attain to assurance, 1.*Joh.* 1. 13. *These things I write unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of *John*, writing in these Epistles, is, to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many commands in Scripture for Christians, to be serious in searching after assurance, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* It is the blessed end of Gods oath in the everlasting covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the ground and great end that God confirmed his covenant with an oath, *Heb.* 6. 18. was it not, *That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy and love could not be wel exercised. If a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest in Christ, he could not give obedience to that exhortation, *Rejoice evermore; again, I say, rejoice.* 6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a christiā may win to assurance; as is clear 1.*Joh.* 3. 18. 19. 2. *Pet.* 4. 5. compared with *verse* 10. where the Apostle *Peter* pressing the doctrine of making our calling and

election sure, he setteth down these excellēt means by which they may win to it; and doubtless, the marks and evidents that are registrate in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us that assurance is attainable. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments, but that our assurance may be confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthened: the two Sacraments are the two great seals of heaven that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, and the more full improvement of this first point, I shal only offer these considerations. 1. I would have it taken notice of, that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such band of union between them, that the one cannot cōsist without the other: a Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and have no light: a Christian may be going to heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from his sight:* yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and sometime a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out; *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it, when ye miss assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces; but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that

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is, when ye cannot reach the Faith of assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence: remember *Job*'s Divinity, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee.* And consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace, whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, that since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive, that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two. 1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And 2. our untender and unsuitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort, we shal lay before you these five. The first is, want of favorable returns of prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debate his interest, & call in question his evidences, *Lam.* 3. 8. cõpared with *vers.* 18. *I cry & shout, but he shutteth out my prayers:* and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, *vers* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord:* and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their interest. And I confess, it is a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer; but yet that needeth not make a believer question all, and debate the reality of his interest in God, since the dearest of all the children of the Kingdom have been so dealt with, even a *David*, *Psal.* 22. *Cryed night and day without silence*, and is not heard, but cryeth out, *Why*

art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring: yea, that passage may relate to him who was *the root and off-spring of David*; for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, *that the cup might pass from him.*

Secondly, the want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that he never goeth to his knees, but his heart beginneth to die like a stone within him, then he cryeth forth that word, 2. *Cor.* 3. 17. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:* and sure, if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exercise of prayer: and that this is a rise of the disputing of our interest, is clear from *Ps.*77.4. compared with *v.*7. *&* 9. saith *David, I am sore troubled that I cannot speak.* I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth: he from hence draweth a conclusion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? and hath he in wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever?* I confess, this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and vailed Christ in prayer; so that we can never go to seek God in secret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*; especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *David*'s perplexity much lightened, *v.* 5. 6. from his *remembring his song in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times:* yet we may remember how soon *David* wrote his retractions, as to that sad conclusion, *I said this is my infirmity*, *vers.* 10. and so should we do when upon

upon every straiting in prayer, we begin to question all the Lords kindness towards us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions, painfully & seriously, and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them; but upon the contrary, their corruptions seem to be stronger, & they themselves seem to be weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, by that word, 1. *Joh.* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* And indeed this is a knot that is not easily loosed; but when he seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone*, and *there is no hope in Israel concerning this age*, and yet this also is a word in haste. *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness, even after he was a chosen vessel, *Rom.* 7. how strangely a child of God may be born down with a body of death, even under most serious wrestlings against it. And therefore if thou do seriously maintain the combat, though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thine assurance.

Fourthly, when a Christian is put to more then ordinary outward affliction, when God doth dispence sadly unto them in outward things, then they begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance; this is clear, by comparing *Lam.* 3. *ver.* 18. with the preceeding words; where speaking of the sad dispensations they met with, he draweth that conclusion in *ver.* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, and *Jonah* 2. 3. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am*

now cast out of thy sight: the devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity, and presents it to a Christian, *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go:* as if he had said, didst thou ever know a Christian afflicted so as thou art afflicted; and so he would have *Job* to quite his integrity. But yet we know all these blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him; yea, as *many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten:* and it is the bastards, and not sons, on whom he will not bestow a rod; and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, the rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their assurance, is when their former experience of the manifestatiõs of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built, become tasteless unto them, *as the white of an egge*; and when they meet not with God in Ordinances; but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them, their case becoms very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *David*'s case, *Psal. 77.* when *he remembred his song in the night, and the dayes of old*, and yet had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed; but yet, as we said before, this was his infirmity: and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such an account, because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best, and the Lord is not alwayes present; but though sometimes the

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candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head, yet at other times he is necessitat to cry out, *O that it were with me as in moneths past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christians assurance, I mean such as flow from our unteender dealing towards God, are,

First, a guilty conscience, that is a remarkable word, 1. *Tim.* 3. 19. *Holding the mystery of Faith in a pure conscience*; it telleth us, that this excellent grace, Faith, cannot abide but in a cleanly lodging, even in a *pure conscience*; and when a Christian letteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe?* The guiltiness of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain*, lest *thou be thrust thorow.* And I tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience. 1. It obstructeth a Christians boldness in making applications to Christ; his heart saith, *close*, and his necessity saith, *close*; but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O stand aback*, and do not close. 2. A guilty conscience oftentimes it hindereth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrifie; yea, it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself; we cannot take notice; when he would lay on a plaister on our souls, will tear it off, *and refuse to be comforted.* 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty. O but our souls moves slowly in the paths of God, when we are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, that we are not much

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in the exercise of tenderneſſe. O but if a christian were tender, and if in every ſtep of his life he desired to walk with Christ, and in every ſtep of his life he desired to *ſet Christ before his eyes*, he would easily win to much assurãce, according to that word, *Isa.* 64.5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceſt and worketh righteouſneſſe, and theſe that remember thee in thy wayes*: would ye know the assured christian, it is the tender christian; the christian that doth not crucifice convictions, the christian that breaketh not resolutions, the christian that doth not sit calls and opportunities to prayer, the christian that saith not of any sin, *it is a little one*; or the christian that searcheth alwayes, watcheth alwayes, examineth alwayes, and is alwayes casting out sin, that is the assured christian.

The 3. obst. is, the want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodneſſe, this is clear from that word, *Psal.* 25.14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew to them his covenanc.* I think there are theſe two great evidences that much of the power of godlineſſe is gone from some of our hearts: we fear God no more, nor if we were his companion: 2. and we fear our selves no more, nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us, we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost among us.

The fifth thing that doth much obstruct our assurance, is much *worldly mindedneſs*, and too eager pursuit after the things of a present life: that is remarkable

markable, 2 Cor. 4. v. last, compared with 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We look not unto the things that are seen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present world, which the men of the world seek and delight themselves in: and it is subjoyned, *For we know if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*; so we see assurance and mortification to the world, are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts, the most part of us are conversing with idols of the world: Would ye know where to find our hearts, they are among the vanities of the world. O how true is that word, *Psal. 39. Man walks in a vain shew*, what is man in all his actings, but as one walking in a long gallery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things, and saluting them all, as if they were living Kings and Queens & great persons that could do him good: & so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shaddow* pursuing after *dead shaddows*, a man that is but a short living shaddow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure the one *thing necessary*.

Fifthly, want of distinct apprehensions of these three, the infinit love of Christ, the infinit power of Christ, and the infinit wisdom of Christ; there is not an objection, O christians! that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinit love; there is not an objection ye have concerning the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense Ocean of the infinit power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have

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from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinit wisdom and goodnes of Christ; and there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applyed, taken up, and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance, is, the smalnes of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is smal, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore if we would have assurance, learn not to ly still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shal know ye are rich: *Grow in grace and the knowledge of God*, and by this ye *shal know if ye follow on to know the Lord.*

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times; but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, & I shal but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted & Christ and he joynes hands together, even then sometimes the best robe is put on upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet. *Acts* 9.17. *Paul* meeteth with assurance immediatly after his conversion. 1. *John* 2.12.14. *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you*; so that when a Christian is brought in to Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of heaven, and say, friend, come and see, here is your name written from eternity. But do not mistake me; I do not say this is always so; but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law,

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these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins, and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance. I know, there are some Christians, that if ye ask at them; when they were begotten to a lively hope? they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now I see*; but for the time and the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan.* 9. 23. compared with the preceeding verse, he being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from heaven: *O man greatly beloved*, or as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts* 10. 2. 3. 4. when *Cornelius* is much in exercise of watching and prayer, he seeth a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace with God: and *Jacob* when he was wrestling with Christ, *Gen.* 32. he hath that testimony given him: *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God, and prevailed.*

The third time is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity. I desire not to be mistaken in this neither: I know, some Christians are led to heaven thorow a dark trance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, until the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his fathers house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *Where am I going?* but this is certain, that sometimes, yea oftentimes, Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto

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him at the day of death, 2 *Sam.*25.5. When was it that *David* sang that song, which hath strengthened thousands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him: and 2 *Tim* 4.8 When was it that *Paul* sang that song, *I fought the good fight of Faith, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousnesse*, was it not even then when he was ready *to depart, and to be offered up*? And when was it when old *Simeon* did sing that blessed song. *Luk.*2.29 *Now letteſt thou thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation*, was it not within a step of death, as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to *Simeon* was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet intimation of his interest, Gen. 12. 2. *I will make of thee a great nation*, and v. 7 *The Lord appeared to Abraham*, and before *Jeremiah* be sent a preacher to a rebellious people, he will have that word spoken unto him, *I know thee before thou wast broght forth.*

The fifth time is, when a christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when *Abraham* had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and covenant renewed to him with an oath, *Gen.* 22.16.

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By my self have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will blesse thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard trials, difficulties, and afflictions in the world, then they usually meet with assurance, and so, *Gen* 28. 14, 15, 16 before *Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a christian is under sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from heaven to comfort him, and assure him of his fatherly love and mercy: when was it that Christ left that noble legacy to his Disciples, Joh. 14. v. 27. *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you*, was it not when he himself was to leave them to troublesome and sorrowful dayes, in a persecuting world.

The eighth time is, at some solemn Ordinances and approaches to God, the dayes of a communion to a tender christian have been sweet dayes, when Christ hath come to the soul and said, *Behold me, behold me.* I think the eleven Apostles met with much assurance of their interest in Christ at the communion they were at with him: O what sweet intimations were these, *This is my body which is broken for you*, and *this cup is the New-Testament in my blood shed for you*; and a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation, and I appoint unto you my Kingdom.*

We come now to the second point which we proposed

propoſed from the words, *viz.* That as aſſurance is a thing which may be attained, ſo to ſeek after it, is a neceſſary duty: let me not be miſtaken, as if I ſaid, the having of aſſurance were ſimply neceſſary to ſalvation: no, that were a doctrine as comfortleſs upon the other hand, as the Popiſh doctrine of the impoſſibility of aſſurance is upon the other. But the thing I ſay, is that the Chriſtian ſeeking after aſſurance, and his real endeavoring to attain unto it, is a neceſſary command of God, which he hath bound upon the conſciences of his children amongſt other Goſpel duties. And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this, then the Text it ſelf; what meaneth theſe peremptory injunctions, *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your own ſelves: Know ye not?* &c. But if you will, you may adde that word, 2. *Pet.* 1. *v.* 5. *and* 10. compared, what can be more expreſly commanded, & more ſtrongly preſſed, then that Chriſtians ſhould bend their utmoſt endeavors for attaining unto this bleſſed condition of aſſurance: *Give diligence*, yea, *the rather giving all diligence to make your calling and election ſure.*

From this we ſhal only lay before you theſe conſiderations. 1. If the ſeeking after aſſurance be a neceſſary duty, then theſe three things are moſt lamentable. Firſt, that there are ſo many in this generation *who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their iniquity*: they flatter themſelves with a rotten aſſurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination: they never knew

knew since the first day they were baptized, and did begin to profess Christ, what it was to mortifie one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one tentation, and yet they want not a strong perswasion of their interest in Christ. But ah! will ye stand in aw, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, as (as when ye think ye are in the very gate of heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hell; and when we expect a kindly welcom from the Lord of glory, as one who thinks you have been in covenant with him this many years. ye meet with that dreadful summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account, that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it, yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it? Is it not very lamētable, that many of you to whō I am speaking, since first ye gave up your names to Christ in a visible way, & were reputed amongst the generatiō of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day or an hour apart to examine whether ever indeed ye were in Christ or not. Alace! is heaven of so little moment? Is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there, of so smal concernment to you, that ye will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter? What if any of you were but possessors of a thousand pound, and of your interest or right unto it uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet, till you had made it more secure? What think you shal the men of this gene-

generation answer in the day of the Lord, for neglecting *that one thing necessary*, when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations to make sure a worm-eaten portion in a perishing world, that the whole wit of men and angels cannot secure for one moment. It is certain, the root of all this sloathfulness is Atheism. It is not possible that we believe as really there is a heaven, as we believe there is an earth, or that the world to come is as really as that which is present, or else it must be a strange power in these lusts that keeps us captive, that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shal fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that command is, 2. *Pet.* 1 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure* When the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence? And when he saith, make your calling and election sure, will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly.*

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live so contentedly under the want thereof. How strange is it that many are so seldom on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians, I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance. When we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how

how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there. I will not limite the Lord, nor determine what he may do; but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many Christians of this age have a pleasant night and comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of assurance. I may fear, that lamentation shal be heard upon the death-beds of many; *O poor wretched wandring soul, where art thou going?* And it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are the *careless daughters that dwelleth at ease.* Christ and they are at a remarkable distance: it must be a cold winter and a dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point, is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use, that ye may attain it; and if ye enquire what these means are, I shal only lay before you some few.

1. That they would be much in the exercise of Faith, I mean the direct acts of Faith, whereby the sinner from his sense & feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fulness: for indeed, there are two great faults amongst the Lords people; some do seek assurance of Faith, before ever they

they seek to hath Faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthning their evidences, so the most of their time is spent in questioning: O is this a real evidence of assurance, where as more actual believing in Christ and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and the surer way? That word is most clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise*; that is, ye got assurance, but not before ye believed. And ye know, it is said, *Matth.* 9. 2. And *when Jesus saw their faith, he said, Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*: So then it is clear, that to be much in believing, is the neareſt way to assurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating of them: all assurance is by a practical syllogism; the first proposition whereof must needs be a Scripture truth: And certainly, the firm assent to that truth, and the souls delightful meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord, as a special mean whereby the conscience is helped to make the assumption, and also to bring forth the conclusion: for instance, we see with what strength of affection *Paul* acteth his faith on that word, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came to save sinners*; and presently we see what followeth on it, *of whom I am the chief*, then is his assurance: for doubtless he meaneth, that he was the chief of *saved sinners*: yea certainly a sinner thus exercising himself, will often find

find so much sweetnesse in the general truths that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces and christian duties, that this is among the best means to attaining to assurance, is manifest from 2 *Pet.* 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for indeed it is very observable, that the diligence there mentioned is not a diligence in disputing and questioning about our election, but a diligence in the practice of duties and graces, as is clear from ver. 5. *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) whereto? in adding *to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge*, and *to knowledge, temperance, &c.* and then *ver.* 8. *If ye do these things ye shal neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*; he doth not say in the knowledge of the *Lord Jesus Christ* simply, but of *our* Lord Jesus: importing that, that the result of diligence in these graces shall be the knowledge of Christ as ours, & of our interest in him: and then he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see a far off*, that is, he cannot have a spirit of discerning, and cannot see far in any spiritual matter, and so not in the matter of his interest. O therefore, think not that ye will get assurance by lying down with the sluggard upon your bed: or by your formal prayers, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to assurance, ye must be striving as in an agony, for so the word importeth which is used to expresse our diligence in christian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, so if ever ye would

come to assurance, ye would be tender and circumspect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Psal.* 50. last vers. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright will he shew the salvation of God:* and *Isai.* 32. *The effect of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever.* Ah, the untender walk that many of us have: it is no wonder to see us walk in darkness, such stinking gross vapors that ariseth off our conversation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from seeing God; and certainly such pearls as *assurance*, is not given to dogs and swine, lest they tread upon them.

SERMON VIII.

2. Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

THere are two great ballances into which men do weigh themselves: there are some that weigh themselves in the ballāce of *deceit*, who think that in all their labors there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the spirit, when he shal weigh them, will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found light.* O but there are many who approve themselves, whom Christ shal never approve. There are many that call God *Father*, who he will not call *children*, and many that call Christ *husband*, whom he will not call *spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the

the *Sanctuary*, who upon solid and most spiritual grounds do draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*: who can with boldness and confidence look Christ in the face, and say, *thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence take him in their arms, and cry out, *He shal be eternally mine?* And sure there is not a more pleasant life then to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him? Am I not made up in him?*

Before I come to the words, there are three great & most soul-concerning errors amongst the Christians of these days, that we desire ye may consider. 1. There are many that are more desirous to know what they are, then what they should do: there are some are more taken up to know whether they be justified and sanctified, then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and they are more desirous to know if they be in Christ, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do spend a great deal more time disputing that question, *whether am I in Christ or not?* then they do in using of these means by which real union and communion with him may be attained. But, oh! will ye once study more to be in him, & that shal be the shortest way to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The second great error is, that some are more desirous to know what they should do, then they are desirous to do what they know: are there not many of us that have this question, *Wherewith shal I come before the Lord?* and yet we do not know his commandement is with us, that we *should do justly, love mercy,*

and walk humbly with our God. A third error is, that we are more in talking of Christ, then in believing in him, or closing with him: some of us think to win to heaven by discourses, if we can talk of Christ, we think all is without debate or controversie; but alas, there are many who were sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing him this day in hell. And I would only say this by the way; if there be any of you that have win to any soul perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you if you can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a moneth & in such a year of God, you then did win to cry out, *I am my beloveds, and he is mine*: It seemeth to have been *Davids* practice. *Psa.* 16.2. *O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and it was *Jeremiahs* practice, *Lam.* 3.24. *The Lord is my portion saith my soul*, I say, ye should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when tentations come, and begin to assault you, ye may look to your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing, but I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears, I hope ere long, we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shall be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. *O expectants of heaven, expectants of heaven*, are ye not looking after this day, are ye not looking after it: I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every

every day: he is upon his way, he is upon his way, O to see him, we will even stand and wonder at him: I hope the day is coming, when we shall never loose our grips of Christ any more, he is coming, he is coming; and I think if Christ would give a Passe, we would long to go hence: O what streets are these that are there, is there any here who is groaning for heaven, be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come and wash all tears from our eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words we told you, that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them; The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well-grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable; and of this we have already spoken. The second thing is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God, and to make this evident, it is clear first in this text, from that serious and accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared unto you from the force of the words, & his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our Assurance, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself* & therefore doth the Apostle add, *Let every one prove his own work*, and *v.* 7. *be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this; that we find in

Scripture many vvho have been miſtaken moſt dreadfully in the matter of their aſſurance, *Hoſ.* 8. *Iſrael cryeth out, My God, we know thee*, & yet *Iſrael* vvas in a great miſtake; for in the vvords following, *ver.* 3. *Iſrael had caſt off the thing that was good*: and *Prov.* 30. 12. we find there, *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great deſign of Satan the great deceiver, that vve might be miſtaken about that noble and vveighty point of our *aſſurance* of being in Chriſt: is there not a power given unto him from Chriſt, to deceive the Nations. I may ſay, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us, then in this: if profanity kill its *thouſands*, deluſions kills *ten thouſands*, and this deluſion its *twenty thouſands*. Laſtly, doth not this prove how much a Chriſtian may be miſtaken in the matter of his aſſurance, even that name vvhich is given to our hearts, *Jer.* 17. 9. *It is deceitful above all things, and deſperatly wicked, who can know it?* No doubt this may ſhow us (though there vvere no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a deluſion in ſtead of truth, and imbrace a ſhadow in ſtead of ſubſtance.

The next thing that vve have to ſpeak to upon this point, is to ſhow you vvhere theſe miſtakes do ly, & what are theſe falſe grounds by which ſo many do deceive their own ſouls in this matter: & here there are two ſorts of perſons vvhom vve muſt inform. 1. There be ſome who upon moſt unwarrantable grounds do conclude, that their intereſt in Chriſt is ſure, vvhen indeed it is not. 2. There be ſome

some, upon the other hand, vvho from sad mistakes of themselves, & the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, vvhen indeed they have. The first sort are the vvorst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foũdations, which we beseech them to cõsider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially do meet vvith some flashes of light & joy vvhich they have not been (it may be) acquainted vvith before, or at least not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shal not dispute vvith such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they came to know that there are such as proceed from a saving vvork of the Spirit of grace: but vvaving that debate, give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments and sensible manifestrations (as to the point in hand) they may be sometime a good supporter to underprop a Christians assurãce vvhen it tottereth, but never a good foundation vvhereon he may lay the first stone of that building: And therefore, he is the vviser Christiã vvho first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righteousnes and holines, before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be. 2. Some build their assurance upon the number and bulk of their duties, without cor sidering the frame of their spirit, and the principle from vvhich they flow: they use prayer, and reading, and conference; they vvait upon ordinances, and are alwayes there vvhere the

mean is thought to be most powerful; and upon this they take up themselves in their own armes, blessing themselves as that poor man, *Luk.*18. *I fast twise a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: But alace! they do not cõsider that they *do but build their house upon the sand*, which the first blast of tentation will overturn; because not only all our duties when weighed in the ballance may be found light, but when put to the tryal may be found empty, dead, and lifeless things, wherein the Lord's soul can have no pleasure. 3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their assurance, by judging themselves by the Law, not knowing, or not regarding the spiritual meaning thereof. *Paul* was a gallant man in his own apprehension, when he was without the Law; that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the Law: he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation, and as he showeth us, *Phil.* 3. he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord opened his eyes, we see, he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rom.*7. *He was alive without the Law*; that is, thought himself living and reigning above his sins: but *when the commandement came*; that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived, and he died:* then he saw how that he had triumphed before the victory: he then saw all his sins alive, and, as it were, risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Pauls* first condition, *alive without the Law*! O how many destroy themselves with this,

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they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the law of God but only *Ten*; but alace! thou fool, thou *errest in this, not knowing the Scriptures*; should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, and that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, wherein he showeth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all:* And by that infallible exposition which Christ himself the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat. 6.* whereby he discovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye. O Atheist! thou must take up the ten Cõmands, and subscribe *guilty* to them all. And let me tell you this, if ye will subscribe the Law to Christ, he will subscribe the Gospel to you: if thou wilt sincerely say, *I am guilty*, he will as sincerely say, I have pardoned: *Son or daughter, be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Fourthly, some build their assurance upon the appehension of their hatred of some particular sin, that albeit it was sometimes as their right hand or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or cut it out. But, O wilt thou consider, some sin may be made weak, and the soul (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry out, *get you hence*, and yet the interest of Satan may be strong in the heart.

The fifth mistake is, of many who judge themselves, because they go a greater length then the former, and are kept free from all gross outbreaking sin; how many are there who go sleeping down to hell with this, I am no drunkard, no adulterer;

no murderer, no thief, no whore; this long have I. lived in the town, and they vvere never born can say, I vvronged them? and so they adventure their soul upon this, they never commited any gross sin But I beseech you, be not deceived, remember how that vvretched man did speed, *Luke* 18.11. *I am no extortioner, nor adulterer, nor even as this Publican,* &c. poor creature that he vvas, Christ giveth not a testimonial to every one vvho take it for themselves: and I must tell some of you, that there may be desperate Atheists vvithout God, and vvithout Christ in the vvorld, and yet be free of gross outbreaking sins. I do not think, but many of these vvho crucified the Lord of Glory, vvere keeped from other gross sins. What knoweſt thou, O man, that there is more favor shewed to thee, in that thou art keeped from some gross sins, vvhen yet thou hast a desperatly vvicked heart, then is shewed to the devil, vvhen some links of his chain are taken in, and restraining power, keeping him in from his utmost bounds. God vvill sometimes restrain a hypocrite, or a heathen, as it vvas said of *Abimelech. and God restrained him:* there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, vvhen thou art far from having the power of conquering grace. It may be also, that all that abstaining from outward outbreakings, proceedeth but from outward disadvantages, and not from any fear of God, or respect to him; yea, not so much as from the fear of any eternal punishment. Are there not many amongst us, I believe it, there are many that take away shame, and Church-censure, or civil punishment, and other inconve-

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niencies of that sort, and set a thousand hells before them, they would not be keeped back from one sin, but vvould take the hazard of them all: Yea, is it not vvant of tentation, and nothing else, that hindereth many from gross outbreakings: if Satan would come but with a kindled march there vvanteth no more to set tongue and hands, and all on fire of hell. O vvretched soul! do but ask thy self how often hast thou tempted Satan, vvhen he vvould not tempt thee? And how often hast thou followed a tentation, vvhen it fled from thee; yea, vvhen the Lord had hedged up thy vvays that thou could not overtake thy lovers, how many a long look hast thou sent after them? And what lustings of thy spirit within? And do ye think that heart-sins are nothing? Although thou had no outbreaking, what were the matter of that? If thou had not a tongue, thou would break the third cõmand, and *curse God in thy heart*; if thou had not an eye, thou could commit adultery *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thine assurance upon this, that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter, when yet all filthiness is within.

The sixth false foundation, upon which I am sure too many build their assurance, is their gifts and parts, and especially upon these two, the gift of prayer, and the gift of knowledge: but believe it, it is not much to be a Christian in tongue; but it is much to be a Christian in heart: know ye not that this will cast out many, *We have prophesied in thy Name and in thy Name cast out devils?* No doubt these had been excellent flourishers; and if the

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tongue would have done it, they had been highly advanced; but ye see these men meet with a *depart from me, I know you not.* Ah! think upon it: he is not the best Christian, that is the best Orator: Religion that is pure, and undefiled, consisteth more in the affection, then in the tongue, and more in practice, then in profession. I beseech you, when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well you have done, and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O, saith one, my conscience doth not charge me with any thing: I thank God, I have a quiet mind, and nothing trouble me: but, ah! poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? A dumb conscience, and a seared conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shal have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart? And because they say so, the Lord shal not spare them; but all the curses in his Book shal ly upon them.

The eighth false ground is the approbation of other Christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised Christians; or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. O cursed be the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars. O man, or woman, let me assure you this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ, subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever

ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you, and it both; *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word, *I know you not*; as if he said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The ninth false ground, is, their diligent observing all the Ordinances, their going to preachings, and their going to Communions, *and running to and fro*, pretending this end, *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at table with Christ here, that shal never sit down at the higher table with him hereafter. Are there not many that shal say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shal say, *Depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shal only say, it may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy sinful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad Divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to heaven. It may be it were better reasoning (and though I will not say it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to hell. O wilt thou but consider, what if he be *heaping coals upon thy head, and fatting thee to the day of slaughter?* What if this word be your portion

portion, *Eat, drink and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must eternally die?* What are all your pleasures? And what are all your honors? And what are all your possessions? What are they all? Are they not all a bone cast unto a dog? The Lord valueth them not. What if they be *the fatting of you to the day of slaughter?*

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in Christ, when indeed they have, they commonly deceive themselves, and vex their own spirits upon some of these or the like mistakes. 1. Some judge of their estate by their present frame & condition; so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundations: and to such I would only say, that every change of condition doth not speak a change of estate: a child of God may be in much darkness, and under much deadness, and yet a child of God still, *Psal.* 73. It was an evil frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips, and holdeth him by the right hand. *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth fast his integrity; and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine?

2. Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate; and if Christ do not smile alwayes, we know not what it is to keep up the faith of our interest: and indeed this is a great fault amongst Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his dispensation, doth that speak forth a change of thine

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estate? Christ cannot change his voice to us, but we think he changeth his heart. Christ cannot speak to us in the whirle-wind, but we cry out, *Why art thou become unto me as an ennemy?* Oh! shal precious Christ be thus mistaken?

The third ground of mistake about our interest in Christ, is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge and search himself, he can find nothing in himself, but what is the matter of doubting, & therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a believer. But, O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, *Though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all.* O if Christians knew to judge of themselves by what they are in Christ, and not by what they are in themselves, that with one eye they may look to themselves, and cry out, *I am undone*; and with another look to Christ, and cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me.* That with one eye they might look to themselves, and blush, and with another eye they might look unto Christ and *hope*; that with one eye they might look to themselves and *weep*, and with another eye they might look to Christ and *rejoice*. O Christian, wilt thou judge always of thy self by what thou art in Christ, and not by what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with tentations that put thee to dispute thine interest, do but send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O precious Christ, answer this tentation; for this is Christs way with the soul: the Law must

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bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the Law, and deliver us over to it; not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it, as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet and constant travelling between Christ and the Law: when thou hast broke the Law, flie unto Christ to take away thy guilt; and when thou hast closed with Christ, come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake, is, that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them: some christians, if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, and mortification in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie: but I must say this to thee, we should not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touch-stone; for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of Faith, *is alike precious Faith*, with that the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistakes amongst christians, is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by the Word. O, saith one, if I were like *David*, I would believe; but I am not like *David*, nor *Job*, nor *Hezekiah*, and therefore there is none of the Saints to which I should go; and if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe

believe? I would only say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *David*'s objection, *Psal.* 22. 5. 6. *Our fathers trusted in thee.* O they were excellent men; but what a man am I, *A worm, and not a man*; and yet he was put from that objection. And I would say this, are ye below him? In what? I hope ye are not below *David* in necessity: Now though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in necessity, ye have so much the more right to believe; for as we said before, necessity giveth you a right, and the more necessity, the greater right to believe.

The sixth ground is, that Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the covenant, and not by their own; rather examining themselves by what Christ hath promised to do for them, then by what is left to them to do; which thing if it were headed, would put a close to many of our mistakes and disputings.

Having now laid out some mistakes upon either hand, the next we would do, is to propose some considerations to press you to guard against these mistakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, that mistakes about ones interest in Christ, and assurance, is a most universal and popular evil: it is not one of a city, nor two of a family, but many are mistaken in their interest in Christ: that word, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity.* It is not one or two that are under this mistake, but it is a generation: And I suppose there are many

of

of us, vve are of this tribe and generation, *Matth.* 7. 22. he saith, *Many in that day shal say unto me, Lord, Lord, and have we not propheſied; and yet he shal say unto them, I know you not.* Since it is so universal a miſtake, I intreat you be much in the search of your selves, search your own selves: certainly I think, if there were but within this Church one that vvere under this miſtake, it should put us all to this, *Master, is it I: Master, is it I.* But how much more since there is a generation of miſtakers, should it not be our exercise every day to cry out, *Is it I?*

The second consideration is, that as it is a most universal, so also it is a most irrecoverable miſtake: if ye miſtake about this your being in Christ, there is no making up of that miſtake: if once ye pass the borders of time vvith this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ, there is no hope of recovery; eternity vvill cut off access to make up that miſtake. I intreat you, go not down to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say, I know you not. I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint; and if all the Miniſters that ever ye spoke to, should praiſe you in the gate, and declare you to be a son and a daughter of *Abraham*; yet vvhen ye shal bring up your testimonial to heaven, and the Father shal read it and shal ask you *Where is my sons Name?* If that be not there, it vvill certainly be rejected, and cast over the bar.

Thirdly

Thirdly, it is a soul-destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of their immortal soul, according to that word *Isa.* 44.20. *A deceived heart hath led him aside*; and what is the fruits of it, *so that he cannot deliver his soul*; and by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul. I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chariot of delusion: we know some Christ guideth to heaven by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life, till they be in sight of hell; but it is true also, there are others whom the devil guideth to hell, by the very borders of heaven; he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gate of heaven all their dayes, and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly, if once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three notable disadvantages attending upon them. 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the ordinances; for when he heareth preaching, he will apply promises, when he should apply threatnings; and upon the other hand, apply threatnings, when he should apply promises; & so that which should be his medicine, becometh poyson to him. 2. As long as he is under this mistake, it maketh him that he cannot pity nor have compassion upon himself: that though he be the most suitable object of compassion, yet he knowes not what it is to weep over his own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but delusions, all his good motions are but flashes, and all his mortifications coun-

counterfeit, and all his tenderneſs is but the mother of ſtupidity: and therefore guard againſt miſtakes about your intereſt in Chriſt, I intreat you.

Fifthly, conſider that miſtakes about ones intereſt, is a moſt abiding and conſtant miſtake: believe it, if once we miſtake in this, it is one to an hundred if ever we come right again: this is clear, *Jer.* 8. 5. *They hold faſt deceit, they keep it with both their hands.* And *Iſai.* 44. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand*; they hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power. I ſay, if once one be miſtaken concerning their intereſt in Chriſt, it is hard to put them from it; yea, deluſion it is ſuch an abiding thing, that we find Chriſt ſpeaketh of it, as if it would wait upon one before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt, and as if ſome would never quite their hopes of heaven, till Chriſt pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not.* Deluſion may carry us over the borders of time, and lead us in to eternity.

Sixthly, there is much counterfeit Religion that is in theſe dayes: there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderneſs: ſome they love ſhadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very ſhadow of Chriſt: and are there not many who think they are imbracing Chriſt, and yet are imbracing a deluſion and a fancy.

That which thirdly, we would ſpeak to from this point, is, to give you ſome evidences by which ye may know if the aſſurance ye have of your being in Chriſt, be right or no. Believe it, there

are

are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the devil and their own deceitful heart hath drawn, and Christ never gave consent unto it: And I shal propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which we may discern.

First, a real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance: this is clear, 1. *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him*; that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to heaven, *he will purifie himself as he is pure.* And 2. *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit.* O! when a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every tentation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price*, I cannot now dispose of my self: and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils *pillow sowed under your arm holes.* Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness? Can such a delusion as this overtake you?

Secondly, a real assurance putteth the christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion and fellowship with God; It is impossible for one to be assured, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love:* this is clear, *Song* 2. 16. 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his:* and immediatly followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.* And it is clear

clear, *Song* 7.10.11. *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.* And what followeth upon that, *She* cometh & inviteth Christ, *O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.* O when gave ye Christ such an invitatiō as this, O precious Christ, let us *lodge in the villages. and go down to the secret places of the field.* And *Ps.*63.1. *My God,* there is his assurance; & immediatly followeth upon that, *early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee, as in dry parched land where no water is.* There is a pressing desire after communion. But I would ask you, are there not many here who have the hope of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ was never with them? I desire to say to thee (be who thou will) *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which thou sowest, thou shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, we would let Christ live in heaven many dayes, without giving him one visite, if he would let us alone. But, O if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often would this be our complaint when he were absent, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; or my idol hath carried me away from him, and I know not where to find him.

Thirdly, assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise: believe it, I think this one of the most searching evidences of assurance: There are some Christians, they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of prayer; but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction: And I tell you the reason of it,

prayer

prayer is a selfish grace (to to speak) but praise is a denying grace: prayer seeketh, but praise giveth: *Exod.* 15. 2. *He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation; and he is my fathers God, I will exalt him. Psal.* 118. 28. *He is my God, I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him.* What needeth *David* these repetitions? Might not one serve? No, saith he, I would even spend my dayes in this, *My God, my God*: there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet *batologies*. Now, I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart-exercice of praise, by this assurance that thou hast? This is an evidence indeed; but, alace! many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, a person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him: as is clear, *Song* 2. 3. *I sat down under his shadow*; there is faith, and assurance of it: and what accompanieth that? *As the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons.* Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetness: his power, his beauty, and his usefulness, is above all.

Fifthly, real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust. Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes, when he cryed out, *I am less then the least of all thy mercies?* What? was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word. *What am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* And was not *Paul* a low man in his own eyes, *Eph.* 3. 8. 16. *I am less then the least of all thy Saints?* and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of sinners?* The

assurance

assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry out, *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips.*

Sixthly, real assurance will put him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duties: that word, *Psal.* 40. 8. *My God*, saith he, that is his assurance; and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will, O Lord*; this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, *Psal.* 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, for I will keep the commandements of my God.* I believe it, the love of Christ when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty: and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these days, that setteth men above all duties and ordinances, and maketh them count the Gospel, as well as the Law, *but beggerly rudiments*, and cry out to their neighbors, *Stand aback, for I am holier then thou*, must needs be a delusion.

Lastly, there are these three properties of a real assurance, it is a begotten assurance, it is a living assurance, and it is a constraining assurance. The first two properties of it are set down in that, 1. *Pet.* 1. 2. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope.* Who begat that assurance in thee? I suppose, some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel: but if Christ be not the father of thine assurance, it will evanish and pass away. And secondly, it must be a living assurance: some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands; yea

yea, if it were the most pleasant *Isaac* that we have, if he commandeth us to sacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up.

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate: What think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or no? I suppose, if Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, we would have a thin assembly: I confesse, I wonder that that word doth not make us to walk with sadnesse, *Many are called, but few are chosen.* Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, and as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your Judge; what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ?* I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, *are ye*, and ye in Christ, O! I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors, we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it keeped it self, that is too like a delusion, the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel-invitations that is in

all the Scripture; *Lam.* 3. 34. *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord:* when thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this, there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you, but you have enough of this, and know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come, but it shall not be for your advantage to stay away till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away*, O persons that are in Christ, *come away*; vve must preach that word, *come away*, unto you as long as ye are here, till ye come & *be fixed as a pillar in the house of God*, and go no more out, O study to be near him: O christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shall I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ? When shal there be nothing between my heart and him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between him and us, till we be above the clouds. O these immediate soul-infoldings and imbracings of Christ: Are ye never sending a messenger to heaven desiring a pass to go away that ye may enjoy them? and are ye not longing for the day, when the waters of *Jordan* shall divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall passe thorow? Now let us sing, *sing praises to our King, sing praises*; for he hath *gone up with a shout, and shal come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

SERMON

SERMON IX.

2. Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own ſelves: know you not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I Think ere long, there are many that paſſeth under the notion of profeſſors, that the veryeſt atheiſt when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Are thou alſo become like unto one of us*: Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, and in a fools paradiſe, that *dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they ſhall be hungry*: therefore I think it is incumbēt upon us to ſearch & examine our ſtate and condition; profanity hath ſlain its thouſands, but deluſion and preſumption hath ſlain their ten thouſands: it was an ancient complaint of Chriſt, *Luke* 12. 57. *And why even of your ſelves judge ye not what is right*; I am perſwaded of this, there are many decreets of peace paſt upon earth that are never ratified in heaven, there are many that cry out, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt*, whom yet God by the ſword of his juſtice ſhall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the laſt occaſion, that we ſpake upon theſe words, there were ſix things we intended to ſpeak from them, of the firſt three we have ſpoken.

That which we intend to ſpeak to at this time, is, that there is much ſoul-advantage and ſpiritual

gain that doth redound to the Christian by the distinct perswasion of his interest in Christ; this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the command of searching and trying themselves; as if he had said: it is a business that will be so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to search and try diligently. And for further clearing of the point, I shal only give these three places, *Rev. 2. 17. I will give unto them a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knoweth, but he that hath received it.* By *the new name*, and *the white stone*, is understood assurance, and the intimation of it to the soul. This indeed is such a mercy, that I defy any to make language of it; no man knoweth it, much less can he express it, but he that is the professor of it. And that place, *Isa. 62. 2. 3. I will give unto them a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.* O what a name must that be, which the mouth of the Lord will name? I think, what he giveth, must be one of the noblest names that ever was given, all the stiles and titles under heaven cannot equal it. And thirdly, we see *David* in the 18. *Psal.* found much sweetness and advantage in this, when nine times he hoth that word, *my*: *My strength, my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my strength and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* O *David*, what needeth all these *my*'s? *David* would answer thus: O! he is so sweet in himself; but, O! much sweeter to me, when I put to that positive note, *my*.

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages

tages of aſſurance: The firſt is, that a perſon that is aſſured of his intereſt in Chriſt, he is much in deſiring communion with Chriſt: *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth*, there is his aſſurance, *where thou feedeſt? and where thou makeſt thy flock to reſt at noon?* there is deſire of communion: and *Song* 7. 10. 11. *My beloved is mine, and his deſire is towards me*, there is her aſſurance; and immediatly followeth, *Come, my beloved let us go forth unto the fields, let us lodge in the villages*, there her deſire of communion, *Song* 2. 16. 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and what followeth upon that, *He feedeth amongſt the lillies until the day break, and the ſhadows flie away. Turn, my beloved, and be as a roe or a wild hart upon the mountains of Bether*; that is in ſhort, let me have ſweet correſpondency and fellowſhip with thee, till the day of eternity ſhal come. I think, the deſires of an aſſured Chriſtian, they are like the grave, they cry continually, *Give, give*, and they never ſay *it is enough*: What is the reaſon ye ſeek ſo little after fellowſhip with Chriſt? It is even this, ye are not perſwaded of your intereſt in him: believe it, if once ye had attained to this bleſt length, as to cry out, *Chriſt is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at ſuch a diſtance with him, as ye do for the moſt part: O but aſſurance maketh abſence from Chriſt an unſupportable burden, *Pſal.* 22. 1. *My God, my God*, there is aſſurance, and immediatly followeth his complaint, *Why hideſt thou thy ſelf from me? Song* 2. 1. 2. 3. that word, *Him whom my ſoul*

loveth; made her to weep so much under absence from Christ: and *John* 20. 13. when the Angels ask the question at *Marie*; *Woman, why weepest thou?* I think she thought it a needless question, and she tells them the cause of it, *They have taken away my Lord.* I think her heart was at her mouth, when she pronounced these two words, *my Lord*; she spake them with a great deal of emphasis and force: could ye resent absence with Christ so little, if ye were assured he were yours? I confess, it is no wonder when persons loose that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the loss of it; but, O! to loose that which is our own, it maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly, it maketh the soul to have a high and matchless esteem of precious Christ, *Song* 5. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief amongst ten thousand.* O, saith the Spouse, I never saw his like, and I shal never see his like again: there is much in that *my*: interest maketh her look upon Christ with another eye nor she would have done, strangers look upon him but as a *tree planted on the sand*, 1. *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious*, not to every one; and *Song* 2. 2. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*, the reason is interest in the words going before, *As the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons*; yea, assurance will make every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to a soul: as is clear, *Song* 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely*, or *he is all desires*. I tell you what assurance will

will do, it will make Chriſt's perſon pleaſant and precious to the ſoul, it will make Chriſt's nature pleaſant to the ſoul, it will make Chriſt's offices pleaſant to the ſoul, it will make Chriſt's promiſes pleaſant to the ſoul, it will make threatnings pleaſant to the ſoul, it will make the ſmell of Chriſt's garments pleaſant to the ſoul, and it will make the kiſſes of his mouth pleaſant unto the ſoul. O, ſaith the aſſured Chriſtian, there is nothing of Chriſt but it is moſt pleaſant, and is all deſires: his threatnings are pleaſant, they are the wounds of a friend: and his kiſſes are pleaſant, they are better then wine: his Name it is pleaſant, it is a precious oyntment poured forth: his ſmellings are moſt delightſome, *whoſe countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.* O! to imbrace a married Chriſt, how pleaſant is it to the ſoul? What maketh you to have ſo low thoughts of Chriſt? Even this, the want of aſſurance that he is your husband.

Thirdly, aſſurance will make the Chriſtian patiently to ſubmit to every croſs and ſad diſpenſation that he meeteth with: this is clear *Heb.* 10. 34. *They took with joy the ſpoiling of their goods,* and what made them do ſo? *They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more induring ſubſtance.* I tell you, aſſurance, it will anſwer all croſſes with this, *Chriſt is mine:* when they are afflicted, aſſurance will lift up its face, and cry out, *Chriſt is mine:* and when they are reproached, they will comfort themſelves with this, *Chriſt is mine, I can put on the Lord Jeſus.*

Fourth

Fourthly, assurance will keep you from apostacy, and defection from Christ, 2. *Peter* 1. 10. *Make your calling and election sure, and if ye do this* (saith he) *ye shal never fall. Heb.*3.11.12.it is there set down as a fruit of the evil *heart of misbelief*, it maketh us *depart from the living God*; but on the contrary, assurance knitteth the soul to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not easily broken. Believe it, the assured christian can cry out with much confidence of faith: *my mountain standeth strong, I shal never be moved.* The assured christian can cry out with much chearfulness, *In God will* I *praise his word, in God have* I *put my trust, I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me:* yea, he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of danger; *The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shal* I *fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shal* I *be afraid? Psal.* 27. 1.

Fifthly, assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches, which maketh every grace sweetly to blossome in its season. 1. It stirreth up the exercise of love: O how vigorons are the actings of love; when a christian can cry out, *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* Song 1. 13. *My beloved*, there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe, and shall ly all night between my breasts*, that is, as long as time shal last, I shal never have Christ out of my heart, there is love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*; our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love, the sense of his

love

love to us putteth our hearts into a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assurance keeps up the exercise of prayer, it is the assured christian that can pray best, and to most advantage, and in these three things especially is prayer helped by assurance: First It helpeth in the point of *boldness*. O but the assured christian can go boldly to the Throne of grace, *crying Abba Father, and my Lord, and my God*. Secondly, It helpeth our *diligence* in prayer, *Psa.* 63. 1. *O my God*, there is assurance, *early will I seek thee*, there is diligence as the fruit thereof. Thirdly, It helpeth the *fervencie* of prayer, as in that same place, *my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 3. Assurance keepeth in exercise and life the grace of mortification: as is clear by comparing 2 *Cor.* 4. *v.* last, with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen*: *O Paul*, what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world? O, saith *Paul*, and would ye know the ground of it? *We know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*. My house and my treasure is in the heaven: I must have my heart there, and mine eyes also. Would ye know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And 4. it keepeth in exercise the grace of humility: here is nothing will keep christians so humble as assurance, *Gal.* 2. 20. I *live, yet not* I, *but Christ liveth in me*. *Eph.* 3. 8. there he is all in *exalting*

grace

grace, and debasing himself. It is the misbeliever and discouraged person that dwelleth neareſt pride: Believe it, misbelief is big with child of pride and apoſtaſie; theſe are the two children which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And 5. it will help the grace of *repentance*: would ye know what would make the christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms, and call him ours, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They ſhal look unto him*, that is their faith; and *they ſhal mourn as one mourneth for his only ſon.* I think it is known by experience, the ſoul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of ſin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and I can ſay, *He is mine.* O how ſweetly doth they then complain: there is not a ſight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaks all their hearts in pieces, and it is as a ſword piercing into the bones, when they cry out, O what a fool was I, to offend ſuch a precious One, in whom I had ſo much intereſt! Was it not ſenſe of intereſt that made *Mary* waſh the feet of Christ with her tears. Laſtly, it will keep in exerciſe the grace of joy, 1. *Pet.* 1. 8. It is faith which maketh one to *rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.* Would ye know why your graces are withered? Would ye know why all the pleaſant plants of God within your ſoul are decayed? It is this, ye live without ſight of your intereſt in Christ. Believe it (if ſo I may ſpeak) aſſurance will be a watering to your graces every morning, and refreſh them every hour, it being as a channel through

through which divine influence is conveyed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the christian by assurance of his interest in Christ, is, that it maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul. What maketh death, *the King of terrors*, and what maketh it so unto us? Is it not this? We go to heaven under a cloud. The assured christian can take death in his arms, and cry out, *Welcome, O friend.* The assured christian, when he seeth the chariots his father sends for him, doth with old *Jacob* rejoice: and *Psal.* 23. *When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evill.* What brought you that length, *David?* I tell you why, saith he, for *God is with me. v.* 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company. It is the assured christian that can cry out, *Why should I fear death?* Should I not laugh at destruction? I think indeed, the assured christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows: And is not the day of death his coronation day, his mariage day, the day of his triumph, and of his entering into rest; and why then should he fear it.

The seventh advantage is, that a christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God. The assured christian looketh upon every mercy, as a wonder. It is the assured christian that cryeth out, *I am less then the least*

of

of all thy mercies: There is not a mercy he meets with, were it but a drop of cold water, but he can read this on it, that it came from my husband, and from my father. It will be better to him, then the sweetest wine.

Lastly, assurance doth exceedingly help us chearfulness in obedience: O that is a remark connexion that *Paul* hath, *Acts* 27. 23. *The Lord whose I am, and whom* I *serve.* That passage also, 2. *Cor.* 5. 14. is very observable, *The love of Christ constraineth us,* &c. Why art thou so painful a Minister, *Paul?* Why? *knowest thou no man after the flesh*, are not led by carnal interests, nor affections; art so busie and diligent, as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? saith he, love will not let me rest, if I would be lazie and carnal, or fold my hands to sleep: the love of Christ doth alwayes sound that in mine ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but to him who died for me. Now *to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore,* we give praise.

FINIS.

Isaiah